a hard lesson to learn

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a hard lesson to learn

by hannibalsbirthdaycake

Summary

Will is trying to adjust to his freedom, but he finds it difficult to play the part of who he used to be.

The first fic needs to be read to understand this one!
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If any of these tags bother you, please keep scrolling! It’s dark stuff, and I’m not looking to trigger anyone!

A prologue of sorts

It'd been a month since Hannibal let Will go. A month since he'd ended up in the hospital and greeted tearfully by Alana. One month since he first got to go home and see his dogs. An entire month living his old life, reprising his role as FBI profiler Will Graham. Being little more than an actor playing a character.

And that's what it was, wasn't it? A charade. He went through the motions, even started teaching at the academy again but he's not the same. He doesn't feel like Will Graham anymore. He's Will Graham by name only. Everything about himself is *different*.

Everyone can tell. Jack tiptoes around him, doesn't raise his voice like he would often do *before*. Before Will ended up pathetically traumatized and subservient in a way he can't control. If anyone even remotely raises their voice at him, he fights to resist the urge to fall to his knees and beg for forgiveness, to offer sexual favors in turn for their mercy. He'd wanted to die of embarrassment when eventually, one day, he was unable to resist the urge.

A couple weeks after he'd been released from the hospital Jack had attempted to get him to consult on a case. Will agreed immediately, because what else was he supposed to do? Often times, he'd forget the word 'no' was even in his vocabulary. It hadn't been part of his vocabulary at the compound. Saying 'no' had disastrous consequences there.

He'd ended up spiraling into a panic attack, on his knees, trembling and sobbing once at the scene. His heart was beating so hard and fast, he hadn't even heard himself begging for forgiveness, nor felt his hands grasping at Jack's slacks. His panic was not because of the grisly scene in front of him, but because Jack had yelled at him. The older man's frustration over the case bled out and into Will, grabbing his heart and squeezing. His visceral reaction was unstoppable and painful for him, even. His muscles contracted involuntarily, causing aches in the muscles along his spine, as if recalling by muscle memory how it felt to hold the submission position on his knees for hours at a time.

Forgetting why he was on his knees, or maybe never even being aware of why, he'd begged Jack to let him stand. Sobbing and blubbering the words like a small, inconsolable child. At least, that's what it looked like to bystanders. Other agents wondered out loud why someone so *unstable* was ever allowed to be this close to a crime scene.

He felt as if he was suffocating, as if he'd done something to cause the frustration. Falling to his knees was an act of self preservation and he'd had no awareness of his surrounding, he did not notice that there were a multitude of other people milling about—not that it would have mattered. His control over himself and his situation was minimal at best, and extinct at worst. He'd known his trainers liked him best on his knees, they'd say it reminded him of his place as less than them. He remembers the old Will Graham, the one who fought against it, fought against the training and abuse. But that Will Graham is gone. And what's left is little more than a shell of who he used to be.

His awareness of his situation was nonexistent. He'd been thrust right into a particularly intense flashback. Was it only because of Jack's tone, or perhaps something he'd said? Will can't untangle his mind enough to remember even after the attack passes.

He'd gone to see Hannibal as his psychiatrist twice a week since his release. Sometimes, he'd be open with the man, telling him about his day and his struggles. Other times, and more often, he'd be unwilling to speak, instead climbing the ladder and perusing Hannibal's book collection. The psychiatrist took it all in stride even though he never knew which Will Graham he'd get. Their relationship stayed entirely professional, Will never initiating any kind of physicality and Hannibal followed suite. Resolved to allow things happen, if they happened at all, at Will's pace. He'd begun to think they'd never become more than doctor-patient, until one evening, he receives a call from Will.

Chapter 2

Will struggles, fighting against the hands holding him down. It's another nightmare like all the others, centered around the castration they'd subjected him to when he first arrived at the compound. But this dream is different, the hands holding him down burn pleasantly, the sensation shooting to his groin. He feels arousal entirely unbidden. This has never happened before. The hands working on his balls make him feel like he could come from it alone.

A hand ventures upward to his erect cock and a finger teases his slit. It's Cordell's hand, and it isn't entirely out of the norm for him to recall this part of the procedure in his nightmares. It is, however, the first time Will feels unmistakably aroused by the sensation. He wants . He ***wants*** *to get off on it, and that makes him sick.*

Before he comes, he wakes up, heart racing and cock achingly hard. He's sweaty and disoriented, the dream feeling so real and so inconceivable at the same time. He swallows thickly, choosing to ignore the nauseating erection he has.

Ignoring his erection is pretty par for the course for him. He'd actually been unable to touch himself since his release from the hospital. Anytime he tried, the memories would assault him, forcing him to recall his surgery, the rapes, and the unwanted orgasms. He'd all but given up at this point and it almost seems pointless to continue with the testosterone injections. He feels like he'll never be a real man again. Eventually, he wants to broach the topic with Hannibal, but he's ashamed. He's a grown man and he can't even jerk off.

Waiting for the panic to subside, Will sits up in his bed, the sweat soaked sheets cooling beneath his ass. He considers himself lucky in that he hadn't wet the bed. That's also something that popped up after being released. He hasn't told Hannibal about that , either.

He grabs his phone, making a decision to call Hannibal before his brain can even catch up. He automatically dials the number, hearing the ringing in his ear before he realizes exactly what he's doing. It's too late though, Hannibal picks up after the third ring.

" *Hannibal* ," Will's breathless voice says into the phone as soon as he picks up.

He says it like a prayer, a plea. Desperation for something neither he nor Hannibal understands. Will spends most of every day trying not to think of Hannibal, unsure if he even wants to pursue a relationship with him now that, as Hannibal says, he's processing his trauma. He worries what would happen if he were to tell the man he was no longer interested, but he never does because it's unequivocally false. He loves Hannibal. He loves him so much it hurts . But he's an absolute mess now. Even more than he was when he was Hannibal's captive—if that's possible. He doesn't know what his feelings are regarding most things, most of the time. The only bit of clarity he has is the knowledge of how he feels about Hannibal.

"*Are you alright, Will?*" Hannibal asks, not attempting to hide the concern in his voice.

"Fuck, I don't—I don't know ." Will replies.

It’s driving him mad the way everyone looks at him. Like they know exactly who he is and what happened to him. He sees it in their eyes, he’s a victim. He’s no longer just socially awkward, autistic Will Graham. They treat him like he’s a bomb that could go off at any moment, and he supposes it’s accurate because he feels like the bomb is going off now , just beneath his skin.

He wants to scratch at his skin, peel it off. He still feels overstimulated and he doesn’t know why. This never happened before . The nightmare he had lingers, and he feels it all over his skin like insects crawling over him.

Overstimulation was something he’d dealt with before he was taken, but it always had a cause and would pass once he got away from the stimulus. This feels different, like it’s coming from simply being alive . He groans into the phone, feeling his head spin with all the emotions he keeps trying to push away.

He needs Hannibal like he needs to breathe. He misses him, as fucked up as he knows it is. Though in his time with Hannibal, the man hadn’t been abusive toward him, aside from the obvious power imbalance. But he never truly took advantage of it. Not like Will had been expecting and deep down, still expects. He expects it of everyone.

What if they find out he’s lost his backbone? How would they use it against him if they knew he couldn’t say no? Because most of the time, he can’t. It’s like his mouth won’t form the word. It’s why he ended up at that crime scene. He’d known then he wasn’t ready to be out in the field like that, but he has no agency, can’t fend for himself. A reaction so extreme it goes from self preservation to a form of self destruction. He hadn’t known how bad it really was until Hannibal let him go and he realized he’d have to face the world as a person again.

“*Will? I’m coming over. I need you to tell me if you don’t want me to*.” Hannibal’s voice serious.

“I—please, come.” Will chokes out.

Hannibal’s never been to Will’s house, as far as he knows, so he sends him a text with the address. Will belatedly remembers how disastrous his home looks. Keeping things clean, doing the chores required to keep a household running at times seems impossible. He’s having a good day if he manages to take a shower. The only part of his life that isn’t consistently neglected are his dogs. They’re always fed, let out, and walked. His pack knows something is wrong and Winston is his shadow—even more than he had been before.

He looks around at the dirty clothes strewn everywhere, the sheets halfway off his mattress, the takeout containers littering most of the flat surfaces in his kitchen and worst of all, he glances at himself in the mirror. His hair is unkempt, knotted, and his T-shirt is stained with sweat. He’d made the mistake of taking a nap after work and had woken up sweaty and panicking, believing he was still at the compound. The sun has just set below the tree line—so it isn’t too late, but he knows Hannibal has quite the drive ahead of him. He wonders if he should even bother trying to clean up.

In the end, he does. He throws away the takeout containers and picks up his dirty clothes and tosses them in the washer along with his bed sheets that hadn’t been washed in who knows

how long. When he's done, it doesn't look great, but it looks better. He looks down at himself, still sweaty and unkempt only wearing a thin T-shirt and boxers, but he has no time to fix that because there's a knock on his door. It's not like Hannibal hasn't seen him in worse states of undress. He sighs, rubbing his hand over his face and goes to the door to greet Hannibal.

"Hello, Will."

"I'm sorry for calling you," Will says.

He's not sorry though. Hannibal is the only one who knows intimately what Will went through. He'd been there for the direct aftermath in a way no one else could have ever been. He supposes that was one plus of being purchased like cattle. He'd felt obligated to share everything with the man, unable to say no. Though it's not like he says no very often now.

"It's quite alright. Can you tell me what happened?" Hannibal says, coming inside.

He'd brought a container of soup, accurately predicting Will hasn't been feeding himself appropriately. Hannibal sets it on the kitchen counter and turns back to him, only now noticing his truly disheveled state. He doesn't look good. It's easy to look past the dark circles around his eyes when he's dressed for work at his appointments and otherwise looks normal, but like this—wearing only a thin layer, in his own home, it's obvious how not okay Will is.

"A panic attack. A reaction to a nightmare, I'm guessing." Will replies, almost shyly.

"You've struggled with nightmares ever since your release. What was it about this one?"

"I'm not sure. I just woke up and felt like my skin was too tight and no matter how many breaths I took, it wasn't enough. I thought I was dying." He lies.

"You should have told me how bad it was." Hannibal says, looking around the house.

It's obvious Will had attempted to clean up, but the house still looks dirty. And Will looks dirty too—the sweat stains on his shirt large and dark. When Hannibal steps closer to him, he flinches instinctively. He hates the way his body reacts, as if he's a scared rabbit caught in a snare.

With about a foot between them, Hannibal can smell Will. Underneath the layers of acrid sweat and fear, he catches Will's base scent. An earthy musk mixed with dog, oil, and pine. It's there, but difficult to focus on with the other smells swirling around the man.

"May I touch you?" Hannibal asks gently.

Will nods, swallowing thickly. It's what he wants. He knows it's what he wants. He needs to feel Hannibal's solid body against his own. When a large hand caresses his cheek, he chokes out a sob he hadn't been expecting. Pressing into the hand, he cries. Broken sobs, heaving their way out of his chest like they have a mind of their own. He hates how much of a mess

he is now. Barely even a person beneath his panic attacks and trauma responses. He knows the reaction is normal, expected even, but that doesn't help him see himself in a better light.

"Let's sit." Hannibal says, guiding Will to the couch.

Hannibal is surprised, when instead of sitting next to him on the couch, Will sinks down to his knees, pressing his face against the warmth of Hannibal's thigh. He could tell at times during sessions, being on the same level made Will nervous, but he'd assumed Will had no desire to give in to what he wanted. He'd thought it was simply a remnant of his time in captivity, a desire to please his master.

It isn't sexual for either of them, instead, it's the only way Will knows how to seek out comfort. He feels as if he belongs on his knees at Hannibal's feet, though he hasn't been there in weeks despite how much he'd craved it. He shudders a sigh when Hannibal's hand begins to card through his hair and presses his cheek even harder against his thigh.

His sobs have devolved into only a few tears escaping his eyes, the salty liquid wetting Hannibal's suit pants. His breathing evens out and slows, and the tension slowly leeches from his body. He's more relaxed than he's been in weeks. He doesn't know how long they stay in the position, his mind being perfectly blank, not worrying or thinking about anything.

Chapter 3

“What do you say we get you cleaned up?” Hannibal finally says when he feels Will coming back to himself.

“Hmm,” Will hums and nods, eyes still closed.

Hannibal extracts himself from their position and goes to run a bath for Will. He’d prefer to do this at his own home with his much larger bathtub, but this will have to do. He finds some lavender scented epsom salt and adds it to the bath, knowing Will’s rib is probably still bothering him from where he’d broken it about a month ago.

He rifles through Will’s dresser in search of clean clothes and finds some beneath a bottle of personal lubricant. He notes that the bottle is unopened, clearly unused. In their sessions, they hadn’t spoken of Will’s sexual desires. But it seems to Hannibal that perhaps they should have. He’d known Will had issues when they were living together, but he’d foolishly assumed that would get better in time. He files it away, intending to ask Will about it when he sees the opportunity arise.

Will’s movements are automatic as he walks with Hannibal to the bathroom and the waiting warm bath. He strips off his shirt, uncaring that Hannibal is in the room with his eyes on him. He does the same with his boxers. The garment is tight and thin, still damp with sweat, leaving little to the imagination. The fabric is obviously cheap and it wouldn’t surprise Hannibal to learn Will had gotten them from a dollar store.

He doesn’t avert his gaze even as Will fully undresses, now entirely naked. Hannibal was a doctor—a *surgeon* for many years and nakedness has never bothered him. It doesn’t seem to bother Will that much, either. At least not here, not with Hannibal. Will lowers himself into the bath, groaning at the sensation of the water on his skin. He isn’t in pain, at least not a large amount. His rib still bothers him, but that’s about it. His pain is all inside, stuck in his head. Waiting for him around every corner.

He shudders, thinking about it all. It has a tendency to come back when he showers or bathes, when he’s stripping himself of the armor that is his clothing. He is acutely aware of Hannibal’s presence, sitting on the closed toilet lid, watching him. Any normal person who advert their gaze, not stare so blatantly at someone entirely naked in the bath, but Hannibal has never been normal.

“Like what you see?” Will laughs dryly.

It’s a joke, Will doesn’t think anyone would like to look at him in this state of undress now. Though, he’s been on hormone replacement and his muscle tone has gradually returned, as well as his facial hair he still only sees a broken shell of a man. Doctors told him they could do implants, make him look normal between his legs, but he’d declined. He knows he isn’t normal and he doesn’t need a pathetic reminder of what he’s lost.

His inability to see himself as he was isn't surprising to Hannibal. From what he's learned of Will, the man was never overly confident. He probably never felt right in his own skin. He isn't going to oblige Will with an answer to his obviously rhetorical question. It wouldn't matter if he said he was the most beautiful man he'd ever laid eyes on. It wouldn't change the way Will sees himself.

Will washes himself quickly, not allowing extra time to savor the warmth of the water nor the pleasant aroma of the epsom salt. Hannibal stays in the bathroom with him, and not once does his eyes leave Will. He thinks he should be bothered by the eyes on him, but he can't find it in himself to be bothered. Not with Hannibal. Not with the only man who sees him as he is and still wants him.

When he drains the water, Hannibal leaves the bathroom. Will dresses and follows suite, finding him in the kitchen. He's heating up the soup he'd brought, and as if on cue, Will's stomach grumbles loudly. It's chicken soup, made fancy by Hannibal as always.

"You haven't been taking care of yourself, Will." Hannibal says once they sit down.

Between bites, Will answers, "I know. I'm *trying*."

"I had hoped you'd be more forthcoming in our sessions, or perhaps even seek me out when you realized you couldn't do it on your own."

Will blushes in shame. He feels guilty, having not reached out when it was obvious he'd needed help and had someone ready to give it. But he wanted to find his own way, on his own two feet before going back to Hannibal. He felt like it was the only way to be on truly equal footing, the only way to pursue a relationship unhindered by past experiences and trauma.

"I wanted to do it on my own. You shouldn't have to take care of me. You don't own me anymore."

The last sentence comes out with more vitriol than intended. It still makes him hot inside when he thinks about how he hadn't been a person for those weeks. Even Hannibal, who had treated him mostly kindly, was still his *owner*. He'd been reduced to little more than a pet with no control over what happened to him. Most of the time, he didn't even feel in control of how he felt about things. Nausea clinches his stomach when he thinks about all the ways he was controlled at the compound, some he hadn't even spoken about with Hannibal. Some he'd done his best not to even think about after getting out.

He thought he'd never be free again, but here he is—free. And it shouldn't be so hard to deal with. He feels like he's chasing control like it's a high. But he can't ever reach it, leaving him spiraling constantly, living a charade of a life. And the more he thinks about it, the angrier he gets. Maybe he wasn't meant to have his freedom back. Maybe he needs a strong guiding hand to keep him from spiraling. He shakes his head, appalled at the very thought.

"I do not wish to own you, Will. I only want to help you own *yourself*."

Brokenly, Will looks up at him, "How?"

“Perhaps you need to give up control to be in control.”

By that, Hannibal means something akin to being a submissive, though not inherently sexual in nature. It’s an unorthodox therapy, but Hannibal has never been particularly orthodox. He’d first thought of it when Will had sunken to his knees and rested his face against his thigh, as if the boy wanted to be beneath Hannibal—like a dog curled at its master’s feet.

“How did you feel when you were on your knees next to me earlier?” Hannibal inquires.

“I—it made everything in my head quiet.” Will answers almost inaudibly.

He knows Hannibal is right. Nothing about his life has felt right since he was freed. He’d assumed it was a lingering effect of the trauma, and it still probably is. But, he likes the idea of Hannibal being able to help him. Even if his help is only a temporary balm to his wounds. Maybe if he stops chasing control in his life, he will finally get it. Maybe. Living the way he has is exhausting. He thought all he needed was some time and he’d be back to his old self, but with every new day, he sees how unlikely that is to happen.

What has also begun to bother him is that Mason Verger and his operation are still out there, going about their day to day operations without a care in the world. He wants to burn it all down. *Needs* to end it. Even at the expense of his own wellbeing. The desire for retribution grips his heart with unyielding pressure. It’s hard to ignore at times.

Jack had insisted they’d do whatever they could to bring Mason Verger down, but in the last month, he hasn’t mentioned it again. He knew it’d be hard, probably impossible to go about it in any legal way, what with all the politicians and high ranking officials who use Verger’s services. It’s like the country’s best kept secret, and nobody cares because everything can be bought for a price. Even people.

As it is now, Will is a twitchy, sweaty, anxious little man who has had his confidence forcibly ripped away from him. He’s in no position to start a fight with Mason, and the lingering danger of ending up back in the man’s clutches usually makes Will shy away from the thought. He survived it once, he wouldn’t survive it again and he knows it. But here, with Hannibal in his house offering his help, he sees a proverbial light at the end of his tunnel.

Chapter 4

Will doesn't immediately take Hannibal up on his offer for help, unsure of what it would truly entail. Instead, he continues trying to play the role of who he used to be and failing miserably. He hadn't been bothered by Jack since his meltdown at a crime scene sometime ago, so he was surprised when the man comes to find him after a lecture one afternoon.

"Will." Jack greets as the last students file out of the room.

"Jack." He replies, pushing his glasses up his nose.

He doesn't wear them often now, but still dons them when he teaches, using them as a sort of barrier between himself and the outside world. His stomach drops when he gets a read on Jack's face. It's clear he's come to ask Will to consult on a case.

"I need your help." Jack says.

"Why? You're the head of the behavioral science unit! You figure the case out." Will blurts, though he knows he will say yes if he keeps pushing.

"I've tried, Will. I need *you*."

Will sighs, rubbing at his temples, "Alright, fine."

"Excellent. The scene is about an hour from here. You can ride with me."

"Now? I have an appointment with Han—Dr. Lecter soon."

"Reschedule."

Will sighs, the knot in his stomach growing ever tighter. Whatever this is, it can't possibly be as bad as his meltdown at the first crime scene. He pulls out his phone and sends Hannibal a quick text, letting him know he won't be making it to his appointment. Not keeping his commitment to Hannibal makes his throat tighten, feeling as if he's breaking a rule. As if he's deserving of punishment, but he knows that's not rational. Normal people have to reschedule sometimes and they don't deserve to be punished.

He rubs his hand over his face, already feeling a headache coming on. He doesn't want to be going to this crime scene. Doesn't want to be in a car with Jack. They haven't been alone since he was released. He only hopes that there are no pathetic attempts at talking.

He knows Jack cares about him, maybe even considers him a friend, but they can't talk about this stuff. Will isn't going to divulge just how much his trauma has impacted him. That, coupled with his empathy disorder, now makes looking at these scenes just on the side of unbearable. But, as always these days, he doesn't know *how* to say no.

His boundaries had been quite literally beaten out of him and he hasn't quite figured out how to get them back. He hates the feeling it gives him—to be sequestered into Jack's car and taken to who knows where to view the grisly remains of yet another Maryland serial killer.

He finds himself resting his forehead against the cool glass, idly wishing Hannibal was there with him. The man has always had a calming effect on him and he needs that now. He feels a preemptive panic attack bubbling just beneath the surface, ready to come out at the first sign of trouble. He hates the way the panic makes him feel, like he's lost all control of himself both physically and psychologically. He wonders sometimes if he's actually gone crazy—for real this time, not as a result of some rare disease like encephalitis.

"We're here." Jack announces, when they pull into a rest area off I-70.

"Scene's still pretty fresh. This is the third body we've come across like this in the last month." Jack explains, motioning for Will to follow.

He does his best to listen, to grasp what he's being told, but all he can think about is the sensation of his throat closing and his heart beating so rapidly, it feels as if it might burst. He rubs his temples, attempting to ground himself. *Everything is fine*, he assures himself.

But it's *not* fine, and it never will be. At least, that's how feels when he sees the body. He recognizes the boy immediately, though now he looks skinnier, his pale body littered with bruises. It's the kid that had been in the sterile room with him when he'd woken up at the compound. admittedly, he hadn't thought of the boy often, too caught up in trying to get his own life back to worry about anyone else. He feels an overwhelming guilt creep up in his stomach, moving all the way through his body like an electric shock. It's gripping enough to make him want to fall to his knees, but he doesn't.

Jack clears the scene, leaving Will alone to do 'his thing' as they say. He doesn't do that anymore. Hasn't been able to empathize with any killers since his release. He can only empathize with the victims. He can feel their pain, their fear as if it were his own. That doesn't help Jack solve cases, it only works to traumatize Will further. Nonetheless, he closes his eyes, breathing deeply. He'll try to do this for the boy, for Jack.

The first thing he picks up on is fear, gut-wrenching fear. Anguish unlike anything he's ever experienced. He's on his knees, naked, but that is not unusual. He can't remember the last time he'd worn clothes. There's a heavy, chain collar wrapped tightly around his neck and his acutely aware of how the metal feels biting into his skin. He wonders if it's a prong collar, like the ones they use on dogs. The ones with the prongs that bite into the flesh when the collar is pulled.

His hands are tied tightly behind his back so he can't feel it, but the pain of it being there doesn't let him forget. His other senses are being assaulted, too, he realizes. The odor emanating from the room he's in is one of body odor, blood, urine, and the sickly sweet cloying scent of fear. Looking down at himself, he sees how dirty he is. How beat up and wounded, too. There are scars along his sides, finger shaped bruises along his hips and arms, and burns on the soft skin of his stomach.

“This one is about used up, wouldn’t you say?” A man laughs from behind where Will—the boy—is kneeling.

“Probably so. He’s not even tight anymore.” Another man says, almost regretfully.

Will wants to ***scream*** *. He’s a person. Not an object to be used for pleasure. But his mouth doesn’t work, his voice seemingly gone entirely. He can do nothing but kneel there, trapped in the body that isn’t his and listen to the men figure out what to do with him.*

“At this point, let’s just put him down. We can get another in a couple of weeks.” The first man says, and Will hears the cock of a gun.

The gun fires, the sound deafening.

“Fuck!” Will exclaims, hands covering his ears.

His entire body trembles, and he feels like he might vomit. His ears ring from the imagined gunshot and he hates that it felt so real. Perhaps because he’d known the boy and had been in a situation not too much like this one, though his had a better ending. *Or did it?* He wonders. Sometimes he thinks he should have been killed.

He breathes raggedly, working to get air back in his lungs. He reaches a shaky hand up to feel his neck, half expecting there to be a collar there but finds nothing. The nausea passes quickly, and he manages not to breakdown like he’d done in the past, so he considers it a win. But he’s not sure anything he just put himself through will be useful for Jack.

“Will?” Jack calls out, approaching tentatively.

“Yeah?” Will answers.

“Do you have anything for me?”

“I knew this boy. He was at the—the compound with me that first day.” Will begins shakily. “Whoever bought him killed him. They believed him to be *‘all used up’*. They knew they could just buy another one.”

“Do you know anything about who might have bought him?” Jack inquires further.

“Other than the fact he sold for a lot of money, so whoever bought him is probably disgustingly rich, I don’t know.” Will answers, a finality in his tone.

He tries not to think about that day, or any of the ones before it for that matter. He does his best to repress the memories, but they often come back aggressively when he sleeps. Men grabbing at him with clawed hands, tearing away his flesh, fucking him until he bleeds. He tries to think more abut his time with Hannibal, though even that can throw him into a panic attack because sometimes, his brain convinces him he *misses* being owned. It’s an entirely different kind of panic.

Jack appears to be done with Will for the moment, so he finds a spot and sits down. Pulling out his phone, he checks to see if Hannibal texted him back, and he has. For some reason, his

stomach drops before he reads the message, worried that Hannibal is going to be angry at him, maybe angry enough to discontinue his therapy. Will feels as if he wouldn't be able to survive it. Sometimes, the thought of Hannibal *knowing* him, *seeing* him, is the only thing that gets him through the day. He reads the text from him, shifting in his seat in discomfort.

'I have a 24-hour cancellation policy, Will. This is very rude.'

'I'm sorry. Jack needed my help on a case.' Comes Will's shaky response.

'Very well. Let me know when you are back. We can have our session then.'

Will types out a quick 'ok' and pockets his phone. He can't shake the feeling that he deserves to be punished for this. As if he's disobeyed Hannibal and needs to hurt to make up for it. The ever constant knot in his stomach continues to grow with each passing minute. When Jack finally finishes up at the scene and they get into the car, Will almost wants to open the door and get out. He won't have to face Hannibal if he never makes it home. But instead, he ignores the desire and they make the drive back to Quantico.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

> PSA: This chapter contains scenes involving omorashi/watersports. If you don't want to read that, you can skip to the end. I'll put a brief summary in the notes.
>
> This will not become a theme in this fic, it will only be detailed in this chapter (though it may be referenced in future chapters).

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will arrives in Quantico an hour and a half later, tired and wishing to head home. But, in his new fashion, he texts Hannibal telling him he's back and will be at his house soon. He parts ways with Jack and heads to his office to collect his briefcase and makes his way out to his car. It's late at this point, the sun already set below the skyline, so the parking lot is almost empty and he finds some solace in the peace and quiet.

Turning on the radio, humming along to some 'classic rock hits', Will makes his way to Baltimore. When he arrives, he's shaking again—though he's not sure if it's fear, anxiety, anticipation, or a combination of the three causing it. He thinks tonight might be the night he asks Hannibal to help him, and that scares him because he doesn't know exactly what it would entail.

Hannibal opens the front door before he can knock, ushering him inside. Will toes off his shoes, always feeling like it's inappropriate to wear shoes in a house as nice as this ones. Sometimes he forgets he'd called this place home for a while, too. It settles him subconsciously to be here. His shaking has eased up and the knot in his stomach has loosened some.

"Would you like some wine?" Hannibal asks once Will is seated in the study.

"Sure, thank you." Will responds.

Hannibal leaves and returns with a bottle of red wine, probably worth more than Will's house, and pours them both a glass. It's not unusual for them to share wine during a session, since it is by nature, a pretty intimate affair between the two of them. They've shared too much with one another to ever behave professionally. This relationship couldn't be a doctor-patient one even if they wanted it to be. There are too many feelings involved.

"Have you thought more of allowing me to help you?" Hannibal asks, taking a sip of his wine.

Will looks at him pensively, then downs his entire glass of wine like it's a shot of whiskey. If anyone else had done that in front of Hannibal, he'd think it was unspeakably rude, but here

with Will, he finds it almost endearing. A part of Will's personality nobody could ever beat out of him.

"I… yes, I have." Will says quietly.

"And have you come to a decision?"

"No… I mean—I don't really know what it *means*." Will answers.

"To relinquish control to me?" Hannibal clarifies.

"Yeah." Will says, feeling more relaxed as the wine settles in his gut.

"While you're here with me, during these sessions, you'd allow me to make decisions for you. You'd trust me to do what's best for you and you wouldn't need to think about it. Essentially, you'd exist here ad the only thing you'd need to worry about is doing anything I ask of you."

"Like… sex stuff?" Will asks.

He knows about BDSM, about dominates and submissives. Of course he does. He'd been vaguely aware of it before he'd been taken, but in his research afterwards, he'd learned more in an attempt to understand some of things that were done to him. He found that some people like to partake in consensual master/slave relationships, that they have safe words and things like after care to make sure all parties involved are cared for.

"No, it doesn't have to be sexual." Hannibal replies, moving to refill Will's glass.

"But could it be?"

"If that's what you want, yes."

Will doesn't want to admit he likes the idea. Doesn't want to admit the thought makes his cock twitch in a way it hasn't since he'd been freed. The idea of being here, not worrying about anything other than obeying Hannibal… it seems almost too good to true. Would he actually be able to turn his mind *off*? He finishes his second glass of wine before speaking again.

"What if I agree to do it and I don't like it?"

"Then we stop. We can establish a safe word. A word you can use if, for any reason, you want things to end."

Will thinks about it. He wonders if using a safe word would be easier than saying 'no', or asking Hannibal to stop. Perhaps a word unrelated to that wouldn't feel so heavy on his tongue.

"And what will you be getting out of this?" Will asks.

"You. In any way you'll let me have you. That's enough for me." Hannibal replies.

Will feels his face go hot at that. Hannibal is unabashedly honest when it comes to his feelings for Will. It's sometimes difficult for him to admit to himself that someone might actually be capable of loving him—especially now with all of his emotional baggage.

"Okay. Let's try it." Will says.

"What would you like the safe word to be, dear boy?"

Will thinks about it. He wants to choose a word he doesn't say often, but also something that has some significance to him.

"Louisiana." He decides.

"Excellent. Would you like another glass of wine?"

"You trying to get me drunk?" Will replies cheekily.

"Something like that." Hannibal responds, filling the glass once more.

Will doesn't notice that Hannibal only has the one glass of wine while he's on his third, and if even he had noticed, he wouldn't think much of it.

"When do we start?" Will asks.

"We've already begun. Now, if you'll come here and kneel next to me while I work on some patient notes."

Will obeys immediately, standing and making his way across the study to where Hannibal sits at his desk. He kneels, shifting to find a comfortable position, and soon he does, on his knees with his hands in his lap.

"At any point, you may speak if you need clarification on something I've asked of you or need to use your safe word, but otherwise, you are not to speak unless I ask you a direct question or give you explicit permission. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Hannibal." Will responds.

He'd considered calling him 'sir' or 'master', but those words leave a sour taste in his mouth. He'd hated using them at the compound, and if he can help it, he'll never use them again. Not when people have perfectly good names he can use.

Hannibal's left hand makes its home in Will's curls, his fingers running through the locks gently. It makes Will practically keen and press himself into Hannibal's thigh. He recalls how good this had felt the other night, and could see himself here all the time, without a care in the world.

His eyes slide shut as he enjoys the contact. He listens to the sound of pen writing on paper and the crackle of the fire at their backs. The sound are so soothing, he feels as if he could fall asleep, even in this kneeling position. Neither of them speak, and Will doesn't mind. Silence with Hannibal has never been awkward. He even finds himself not even wanting to

speak, as if he doesn't want to ruin whatever moment they've found themselves in with his voice.

He's not sure how much time has passed, but he opens his eyes blearily when Hannibal grabs a bottle of water and brings it back to the desk. Will's mouth is dry, he realizes, and he's pleased to see Hannibal remove the cap and bring the bottle to his lips.

"Drink," He commands, his voice gentle.

Will does as he is told, downing half the bottle before it's pulled away. He feels the water settle in his gut where the wine had earlier. Hannibal resumes stroking his hair leaving Will sighing against his thigh once more. His eyes slide closed as he listens to Hannibal switch what he's doing, now pulling out his sketchbook and sharpening his pencil with a scalpel. He finds this new sound soothing as well. He hopes he'll be able to see what Hannibal is working on when they're done.

The thought of that stops him for a moment. *When they're done?* He has no idea how long this is going to go on for. Not knowing makes anxiety flair up in his stomach. Not that he doesn't like this, but eventually his knees will start to hurt and his muscles will ache. Not to mention, he feels a growing pressure in his bladder from all the wine and water he's consumed. The pressure isn't unbearable, and he's not allowed to speak anyway, so he does his best to ignore it.

He ignores it effectively for a while, but eventually the need becomes too large to be ignored and he finds himself shifting his weight from calf to calf and squeezing his thighs together as much as he can from his position. Now, the only thing he can think about is the feeling of his bladder. It feels stretched, distended and aching. There's some sweat forming at his brow and he really, *really* has to pee.

A small whimper escapes his lips when he shifts once more and instead of relieving the discomfort, it makes it worse. The palms of his hands press firmly against his cock in an attempt to stave off the inevitable. He presses himself until it hurts and he whines quietly.

That noise makes Hannibal look down at him. It's obvious Will is experiencing some discomfort, and Hannibal knows why. He'd given will the wine and water on purpose. Intending to exert control over something so basic as Will's bladder for their first scene. Though, if Hannibal is being honest, he's not sure if he intends to ignore Will until he wets himself or safe words, or if something else will happen. Will knows he isn't allowed to speak and Hannibal is curious if the boy will obey, even knowing the consequences.

"Drink." Hannibal says, pressing the bottle to his lips once more.

He does it to see if Will will refuse, or if he will continue to obey, even knowing it will make his situation more desperate. Will obeys without a word, finishing the bottle even though he grimaces afterwards. His hands don't leave their place in his lap.

"Good boy," Hannibal says, stroking Will's lip, wiping away some water that had been left there.

The praise makes Will forget about the pressing need to relieve himself, but only for a moment. It's bordering on unbearable and he can't stay still now, constantly shifting, pressing his knees together as much as he can. He's sweating and shaking now, wondering how bad it would be if he pissed himself. Would he be punished? He blanches, realizing he doesn't even know if or how Hannibal intends to punish him if he disobeys.

Hannibal has been watching his boy from the corner of his eye, seeing him struggle, doing everything he can to continue obeying. He almost pities the boy's plight. He resolves that he'll tell Will to go to bathroom in five more minutes.

Will trembles, knowing he isn't going to be able to last much longer. The muscles in his pelvis allow some urine to escape and he feels the wet spot forming in his boxers. His eyes are wet with tears now, though he cries silently. He looks around, seeing he is surrounded only by hardwood floor, so if he makes a mess, it will hopefully be easy to clean up. He's flabbergasted that he's even thinking that. He's an *adult*—he is not going to kneel here and piss himself like some kind of *child*!

But, even with those thoughts in his head, he remains as still as he can be and quiet. He trusts Hannibal to take care of him, and the other man must know what's going out now. He hadn't exactly been subtle with his shifting and squeezing his thighs together.

When his bladder releases another spurt of urine, Will sobs audibly, despite his best efforts to stay quiet. Hannibal glances over at him, but does not reprimand him. His nose also picks up on the strong scent of urine. But still, Will doesn't speak.

"You've found yourself in quite the predicament haven't you?" Hannibal asks.

Unsure of how much he can say in response he just replies, "Yes."

"Do you trust me to take care of you?"

"Yes, Hannibal."

"Good boy."

And then he stops talking to Will, leaving him to struggle once more. Before Will's bladder betrays him, he considers using his safe word. He feels '*Louisiana*' perched just beneath his chin, but he doesn't utter it.

His quiet sobbing turns into outright crying when he can't hold it anymore and hot urine flows from his cock, soaking his boxers and then his jeans. It feels as if it keeps coming, as he shakes and sobs. Shame and humiliation grip him by the throat and he wants to *die*. He's kneeling here—in Hannibal's study—in a puddle of his own piss.

Heaving sobs tear their way out of his throat, but he stays still. He won't move or say anything until he's given permission. Hannibal is clearly aware of the situation. Even if he hadn't been watching, the smell of urine has begun to permeate the room.

"You may stand and remove your boxers and jeans." Hannibal says.

Will does as he is told, stripping the wet clothing from his body and allowing it to sit in a pile on the hardwood. Naked from the waist down, Will doesn't know what to do. He doesn't think he's allowed to speak yet, he's unsure if the scene has ended.

"You did so well. We're done for the night and you may speak freely."

Will wipes at the tears on his cheeks and finds he's not sure what to say. He almost feels angry at Hannibal, for letting him kneel there and piss himself like a child, but the white hot anger he expects to come never does. Instead, he feels calm inside, and very tired.

"Why'd you make me do that?" Will finally asks.

"You've craved control so much since you were freed and could never get it. Tonight, you gave me control of yourself, even of your most basic functions. You gave it to me *willingly*. That was control."

As much as Will thinks that shouldn't make sense—it does. He feels more in control of himself than he has in weeks.

"I don't want to do that again."

"I hadn't intended for it to become a regular thing. There are risks involved with bladder control like this. Doing it regularly for extended periods of time can lead to kidney damage. Nothing we do should cause you any lasting harm."

Will hums, swaying on his feet. Hannibal takes his arm and leads him to the bedroom where he grabs a wet towel and begins to wiping away the residual urine on Will's legs and flaccid cock. The touches are clinical, though the contact makes Will hard. Much to Will's relief, Hannibal ignores it entirely and once he is sufficiently cleaned, dresses him in a pair of navy blue, silk, pajama bottoms.

Will is asleep by the time his head hits the pillow. He rests well, better than he has in weeks and when he wakes he finds that he hasn't been plagued with nightmares. He even notices he wakes up dry, his night sweats pleasantly absent.

Chapter End Notes

Summary of the chapter:

Will agrees to submit to Hannibal and they choose a safe word (Louisiana), then Hannibal gives Will 3 glasses of wine and water and has him kneel next to him. Will ends up pissing himself, and then asks why Hannibal made him do it. Hannibal's response is "You've craved control so much since you were freed and could never get it. Tonight, you gave me control of yourself, even of your most basic functions. You gave it to me willingly. That was control.".

Chapter 6

“What do you think, Will?” Jack asks the next morning when they arrive at Quantico.

“These other murders are part of the same thing.” Will says.

Jack had shown him the images of the other bodies, and while he didn’t recognize the men, it was clear they’d been subjected to similar treatment. It isn’t a serial killer, though. These people were killed by different people in the same way.

“This isn’t a serial killer, Jack.” Will says.

“This is all part of Mason’s operation?” Jack clarifies.

“Yes. Were both of these bodies checked? For… uh, *sexual* trauma?”

“They were, and yes. The damage was extensive. A lot of scarring and even fresh tearing in the rectum. They also both had relatively fresh castration scars.”

Will grimaces at the information. He’d known that’s what they’d find, but he can’t help but feel like it’s him in the photos. He should have been in their place, but he got extraordinarily lucky. *Lucky*, he thinks bitterly, laughing to himself.

“Something funny about this?” Jack questions.

“Uh, no. Not exactly.” Will answers, face contorting into a frown.

“I’m sorry, I know this must be hard for you.”

“And yet, you’re still asking me to help.”

“I thought you’d want to be a part of bringing these men to justice. Was I wrong?”

“No.” Will answers, skimming over the photos again.

“Did any of these men have microchips?”

Beverly had entered to room at some point, and she answers instead of Jack, “No, but they had wounds where a microchip could have been. I wasn’t sure what the wound was, only that it had been made postmortem.”

“They were smart enough to remove them after they killed them.” Will surmises.

“How’d you know they’d be there?” Beverly asks.

“I cut out mine.” Will lies.

“Gnarly.”

Jack looks frustrated, it's clear all these bodies are connected and it's obvious they're part of Mason's operation, but they don't have any solid proof. Only the bodies and Will's word. Most people don't take him seriously, especially now. Freddie Lounds has published too many slanderous pieces on him, painting him as unstable and drawing suspicion to his story.

"Why can't we just arrest Mason?" Will asks.

"All we have to tie him into this is your story, and thanks to Freddie, that won't mean much to a judge." Jack replies.

"Right. It has nothing to do with the judge probably being on his client list." Will says sarcastically.

"When we make a move on him, we have to be sure. We'll only get one chance."

The thought of them getting away with this, and continuing to do it makes Will sick to his stomach. It seems like this is just too big to stop. Even if they catch Mason, everyone who bought from him will still be out there. He feels himself losing control again, spiraling into a panic attack. His throat tightens and he tries to think about Hannibal, about their session last night. How it felt, and how he felt afterwards. It was *good*. The best he'd felt since his release. And now, the feeling is gone, replaced only with fear and panic.

"You alright?" Beverly asks, moving to place a hand on Will's shoulder.

He shudders at the touch, finding it less soothing than he's sure it was intended to be. He doesn't want to be touched, not by anyone. Except Hannibal. His brows furrow in thought, wondering why he's alright with that. Hannibal is a serial killer, too. Isn't that just as bad?

No. It isn't. And if the bodies they found were Hannibal's work, they wouldn't have had fresh trauma. Hannibal is a killer, not a sadist. *Right?*He rubs at the ache forming on the back of his neck and sighs. Perhaps he'd been short sighted to not consider this part of Hannibal.

"I have an idea." Jack says, making everyone in the room look at him. "We can't connect Mason to any of this as it is, so what if we got new evidence?"

"How?" Beverly asks.

"We go undercover." Jack says, looking at Will.

Will's eyes widen as he takes in what Jack has said. It's clear he means *him*, not anyone else. They want him to go undercover. Back to the compound.

"You want me to go undercover." Will says plainly.

"Yes. But if you don't want to, you don't have to. We'll find another way." Jack says.

"I'll do it."

They need to figure out how to get him inside with a recording device. A camera, a voice recorder, *something*. He'll be stripped once he's in, so he can't hide it beneath his clothing.

They'll take his glasses too, so that's out.

"The collar. We can hide it in the collar." Will says.

That's the only thing they wouldn't remove, he thinks. He shuts his eyes tightly, the thought of wearing a collar again making him nervous. He needs to get justice for the boy, for everyone harmed by these people. And he's the only one who can do it.

"We're going to call someone in to help you prepare for going undercover." Jack says.

"Alright."

The lead agent who handles undercover operations agrees to come in to help tomorrow. For now, Will is free to leave. To enjoy his time as a free man before it all comes crashing down. He has to do it and he knows that, but he is utterly *terrified*.

Later in the afternoon, Will arrives at Hannibal's house, again meeting him at his home instead of his office. He's so flustered by the time he arrives, he barely utters a greeting before coming through the door and toeing off his shoes.

"What is it, Will?" Hannibal asks, taken aback by Will's behavior.

"They want me—they want me to go *undercover*." Will replies miserably.

"*What?*" Hannibal asks, sure he's misheard the man. "No. You can't do that."

"I have to, Hannibal." Will says shakily.

"As your dominate, I need to take care of you. You could be killed—or *worse*."

"I know the risks. I know. But there's no other way to get the evidence Jack needs to prosecute Mason."

"How is Jack going to guarantee your safety?"

"I don't know. They're having someone come in tomorrow to prep me for the undercover mission."

Hannibal crosses his arms, frowning. There's obviously nothing he can do to persuade Will from doing this. Maybe he can find a way to be involved. He's wealthy and a socialite. He could convince Jack to allow him to take Will to the compound. Without giving away his previous involvement, of course.

"I'm going to work with you tomorrow."

"You're not talking me out of this."

"I know, but I want to be involved."

"No, you can't! If Mason finds out he'll kill us both."

“That’s for me to worry about, my dear boy.”

Will clenches and unclenches his fists, pacing the entryway of Hannibal’s home. Angry, not at Hannibal, but at the entire situation he’s somehow found himself in.

Once they get seated in the study, they talk more of their plan. Hannibal will convince Jack to allow him to help by making it seem obvious that Hannibal is the kind of person to attend Mason’s events. He’ll return Will as a sort of *‘concerned citizen’,* and then he’ll insist he stay and help Mason train his captives.

“It might work.” Will says finally.

“Good boy.” Hannibal says.

Will can’t help the immense pleasure he derives from the praise. He’d love to be here, hearing that he’s a good boy, for the rest of his life. And again, so unlike him since he was taken, he feels some arousal at the thought of submitting to Hannibal. It makes his face go red thinking about it.

“Would you like to have another session?” Hannibal inquires, watching Will obviously affected by his praise.

“Yes. I would.” Will begins. “But, uh, don’t make me piss myself again, please. Hard limit.”

“I hadn’t planned on it. Like I said previously, nothing we do should have any lasting negative effects.”

Will swallows, feeling better once he’s heard the assurance again. He shrugs off his jacket and moves to kneel at Hannibal’s feet.

“This time, if you’re comfortable, please remove your shirt as well.”

“Just my shirt?” Will clarifies.

“Yes. But if you don’t wish to do that, I won’t be upset.”

“I can do that, it’s okay.” He says, and he’s removing his shirt quickly unable to stop the shake in his hands.

Now, chest bared, Will kneels and takes only seconds to find a comfortable position. He looks up at Hannibal watching the man rifle through the drawer of his desk and pull out a black piece of ribbon. Will almost asks what it is, but clamps his mouth shut, remembering he’s not allowed to speak.

“I’m going to blindfold you today. Remember, if it gets to be too much, you can and *should* use your safe word.”

“Okay, Hannibal.” Will replies.

He's nervous, having never been blindfolded before, unless being blindfolded to hit a piñata at a birthday party counts. He smiles to himself at the memory. It wasn't his birthday party, but it was one of the few nice memories he has of his childhood.

"I'm going to tie this around your head now."

And he does. Will feels the gentle touch as the soft fabric covers his eyes. He exhales, focusing on his breathing, on the sensation of air moving past his lips. He's never been a fan of the dark, the fear ever present since he was a child. But, he's here and *safe* with Hannibal.

With the blindfold in place, he hears Hannibal settle back into his seat once again. For a moment, nothing happens, though he still feels Hannibal's body warmth radiating toward him. Then, strong hands are on his shoulders. Massaging them. Will sighs, the sensation incredibly pleasant after the stressful day he's had. Hannibal's thumbs work into the knots of his trapezius muscles and releasing the tension there.

Lips touch his neck gently, kissing him there as his shoulders are massaged. All of his senses feel enhanced with his vision taken away and he moans lowly at the wetness of the lips. He's not sure if he's supposed to be aroused by this, but he notices his cock is now half hard.

"My beautiful boy. You should see how incredible you look like this."

If it were possible for Will to come entirely untouched, just from words, those would be the words to do it. His cock is now painfully hard and he only whimpers in response. He's not entirely sure he wants this is become sexual—at least not today, but the idea is becoming even more appealing.

"Do you like it when I tell you how good you are?" Hannibal asks.

"Yes, Hannibal." Will replies, voice breathless.

Hannibal cards his hand through Will's curls, making the boy groan in pleasure. He's so receptive to Hannibal's touch, and yet cannot tolerate it from anyone else. He's still blindfolded, on his knees, and feeling more in control than he does when he's working, teaching, or even at home.

The feeling is addicting, the desire for it making Will's brain fuzzy, though it isn't an unpleasant sensation. It's as if his brain is getting a break from all the terrible things that usually reside inside his mind. He's never been able to truly turn it off like he has been able to hear with Hannibal. The ache forming in his muscles is a pleasant reminder of where he is and who he's with. He's not worrying about what tomorrow might bring. That's not why he's here right now.

After an undetermined amount of time, Hannibal stands and removes the blindfold. Will blinks up at him, adjusting to the now too bright light. The arousal once extremely evident in his jeans has diminished and he feels sated in a way he hasn't in a while.

"I really wanted you to touch me," Will says, feeling like their scene has ended.

“I was touching you.” Hannibal replies, smirking.

“I—that’s not what I meant.” Will says, blushing.

“Perhaps next time. Before we do that, we should discuss more rules and expectations. In fact, I don’t even think we went over punishments.”

“We didn’t.” Will confirms.

“We’ll do that soon. Before our next scene.” Hannibal decides.

Will agrees, almost disappointed that their scene seemed to end so quickly. He also decides not to dwell on the fact that might not have the chance to do this again any time soon. He doesn’t know what the timeline is going to look like for going undercover, but he imagines Jack will want it done soon. The knot in his stomach clinches tighter at the thought.

“For now, I believe you had better get some rest. I suspect both of us will have a long day tomorrow. Would you like to stay the night?” Hannibal asks.

“Ah, yes but I can’t. I’ve got to look after my dogs.” Will says unhappily.

He loves his dogs. They’re the only ones who hadn’t treated him differently when he came back. They didn’t care that he wasn’t the same person. He was still the same to them. It brought him a modicum of comfort and it still does. He smiles gently at the thought of being greeted by his dogs at the end of the day, and it’s that thought that occupies his head on his drive home—not the more pressing matters he’ll have no choice but to think about tomorrow.

Chapter 7

“You can’t put him in there!” Alana yells in Jack’s office the next morning.

Will sighs, readying himself for what he’s clearly about to walk into. At some point, someone must have told Alana about their plans and of course she’s here trying to veto it. He doesn’t wait to hear Jack’s response, walking into the tension filled office quietly.

“Alana, I’m okay with it. I want to do it.” Will says, announcing himself.

He doesn’t *want* to do it, but he has to. It doesn’t seem like there’s any other way. He wishes someone else could do it, but he has the best way to get inside. He still tries not to think about what might await him once he’s there.

“You’re traumatized, you can’t be making decisions like this.” Alana retorts.

“I’m *fine*.”

It angers him that she views him as so fragile that he’s not of sound mind to make his own decisions. He wouldn’t argue that he’s not traumatized—he definitely is, but that doesn’t mean his judgment is flawed. If he doesn’t do this more people will be taken and more of them will end up dead. He can’t live with himself if it happens and he could have done something to prevent it.

“Will can make his own decisions. I wouldn’t put him in there if he didn’t want to do it.” Jack says. “And Hannibal agrees, right?”

“He should be here any minute.” Will answers, nodding.

“Speak of the devil.” Alana says, albeit with a hint of disdain.

“Do you really think Will is capable of doing this and coming out undamaged?” Alana asks, turning to Hannibal.

“As his therapist, I did try to dissuade him from doing it, but you know how he is. If he feels confident in his abilities, I must trust him. He deserves that much.”

Alana frowns, feeling entirely outnumbered. It seems as if everyone else is only interested in bringing the operation down rather than worrying about Will’s wellbeing. Will’s been different since he came back, and she’s not sure if any of him will be left if he goes through with this.

She huffs, turning to leave, clearly unwanted here.

“Please, be safe Will.” She says before leaving the office.

Will frowns, feeling bothered by her concern. He wishes he could just not do it, but as he’s decided before, there’s no other way. He looks to Hannibal, wishing he could scoot in closer

to the larger man, seek some comfort. But, he needs to get used to not having that. Nobody will be there to help him once he's back inside the compound.

"I have an idea on how to get Will back to the compound." Hannibal says, now that Beverly, Bryan, Jimmy, and Jack are all in the room.

"As you know, I come from a wealthy family and I attend many high society events. I know Mason. It wouldn't be too far of a stretch for me to be aware of his operation and to act as a 'concerned citizen' and return Will to him."

"That could work. Agent Martin should be here shortly. He's going to help us prepare for this mission." Jack announces.

Will sits, ignoring the voice in his head screaming at him to get up and walk out. To not do this, telling him he won't survive this again. Instead, he searches through his pockets, looking for the strap of leather he'd brought, surprising even himself that he'd kept it all this time. He finds it, pulls it out to reveal his collar.

"What's that?" Bryan asks.

"My, uh, my collar." Will answers, shame painting his face.

"Why do you have it?"

"I think it could prove useful."

The conversation is interrupted by a knock on the office door. Agent Martin comes in, giving everyone a warm smile. Everyone but Will. His look toward the man is more akin to pity than any kind of attempt at friendliness. Will had long ago grown accustomed to looks like that, especially since he'd been released. Most people only know him by Freddie Lounds' articles and the news stories of his abduction.

Jack did what he could to keep the worst details out of the press, but Freddie is relentless. She'd released an article detailing Will's time as a 'sex slave', almost painting it as something consensual instead of the human trafficking it had been. It seems most of the public were able to see past that, to see him as a victim. He's not sure if he's glad for that or not. He doesn't want to be a victim.

Agent Martin is marginally helpful, only giving Will some tips on how to maintain his cover, especially since they'll know he got out and is working with the FBI again. It'll be tricky to convince them, but with Hannibal's idea, it just might work. The agent does warn him and everyone else in the room that the job is extremely dangerous and Will could very well be killed if he's found out.

"Nobody would think poorly of you if you don't want to do this, Will." Agent Martin says.

"I want to do it. I *have* to." Will replies shakily.

He is terrified. He feels the panic rising in his chest, making his throat feel like it's closing up and his heart beats rapidly. He shuts his eyes tightly, trying to calm himself when he feels a

strong hand on his shoulder. He looks up, seeing Hannibal standing there, eyes soft—a look of worry on his face.

Agent Martin takes the collar and sends it down to the lab. They're going to outfit it with a couple virtually microscopic recording devices. There is nowhere else to hide them, since Will will likely lose his clothing as soon as he arrives at the compound. He's not looking forward to being naked again, to always being cold. They never turned on the heat in the compound and the cement walls of his cell were always unforgiving.

"When are we doing this?" Will asks.

"Tomorrow. The sooner the better—don't you agree?" Agent Martin says.

"Yes." Will replies.

"For now, go home, rest. Prepare yourself for this. It isn't going to be easy." Jack says.

Will laughs humorlessly, "I know."

He has intimate knowledge of what exactly he's walking into. His body is racked with so much fear and adrenaline, it leaves him almost feeling numb, his limbs working of their own accord to carry him out of the building and into his car. Hannibal is following close behind and they leave at the same time, toward the same destination: Hannibal's house.

Will huffs a laugh at the irony. He's choosing to spend his last day of freedom at the very place he was held captive before. But he loves Hannibal, and sometimes he hates himself for it. The other man is how he's going to get through this, it's knowing he has someone waiting for him. He'll survive. He has to.

Will is quiet as they go inside the house. He's not sure what to say, if there's even anything to say. He feels antsy, like he could crawl out of his skin. And that's when he knows what he wants to do before tomorrow.

Surprising Hannibal, he brings their lips together in a kiss. Hannibal quickly adjusts and wraps his arms around Will's shoulders, deepening the kiss. Will's mouth opens to allow Hannibal's tongue inside, against his own. He moans into the contact, arousal coursing through him, like it's setting him on fire. He *wants*. God, he wants.

Hannibal presses him against the wall, feeling his clothed erection against his clothed leg and he moans. He wants Will, has wanted him since he laid eyes on him what seems like a lifetime ago. He breaks the kiss, leaning backward to look at Will, face flushes red, lips swollen and spit slick from the kiss. His boy is *beautiful*.

"What do you want, Will?" Hannibal whispers.

"You. I want you. *Please*," Will rasps.

He doesn't want to think about anything else. Only the way Hannibal's body feels pressed up against his own. He wants to feel Hannibal inside him, his hand on his aching cock. He wants to feel cared for, *loved*. He wants Hannibal to make love to him.

Hannibal lifts Will up effortlessly, carrying him down the hallway to the bedroom where he deposits him on the bed. And then, he's stripping off his shirt and climbing on top of Will. He strokes his hand down Will's cheek, down his neck and onto his torso. He looks down at the boy beneath him, unsure if he wants more.

"Tell me what you want." Hannibal instructs, stilling his hand.

"I want you to fuck me." Will breathes.

With permission, Hannibal begins to unbutton Will's shirt, freeing his torso and feeling the warm skin there. He moans at the sensation, having pictured this moment for far too long. Will is equally aroused, his erection hard and still confined in his slacks. Will thinks he might come when Hannibal grinds his hips down so their cocks rub against each other.

"Fuck," Will whines, lifting his hips and chasing the friction.

Hannibal's deft hands move to the button of Will's pants, making quick work of it and the zipper. He pulls the pants down slowly, leaving Will clad in his boxers. His cock is leaking, leaving a dark spot of precum on the material. Hannibal can't resist rubbing the erection with his palm, and listening to the desperate keening noise ripped from Will's throat. Finally being allowed to touch, to pleasure, leaves him with a heady feeling of arousal.

"Oh, god, *please*," Will begs.

Hannibal's fingers hook into the boxers and pull them down his legs as well, leaving Will entirely bare. His cock springs upward, finally free of its confines, and Hannibal admires it. Wants to taste it. So he does, licking a long stripe from the base of Will's cock to the head.

It feels so good, Will might cry. It's like he'd forgotten what he was missing. Being touched, being pleasured like this. Hannibal takes him in his mouth entirely, allowing the head of his cock to touch the back of his throat. Will does his best not to thrust up into the heat of his mouth, but he can't help the few aborted movements of his hips. The way his body only knows one thing right now and that's pleasure. It feels so, so good.

Will whines helplessly when the mouth around his cock is gone. But he's moaning once more when that same mouth is licking at his rim. Sucking and spearing into him with his tongue. It feels intimate, intimate in a way sex has never felt before. Will doesn't dwell on the thought too much, too lost in the pleasant sensations he's being bombarded with.

Hannibal moves his attention to the scar where Will's sack used to be. He kisses the area, licking and sucking there as well. It's almost like he's worshipping Will's body, even the imperfections. He feels tears welling up in his eyes, and he resolves to himself that he's *not* going to cry, not because of this.

Hannibal's mouth is gone in an instant, and Will can't form coherent words to ask him not to stop, so he looks up his wet eyes meeting Hannibal's. He watches wordlessly as Hannibal grabs the lubrication from the nightstand and slicks up his finger before slowly inserting it into Will's hole up to the first knuckle.

Will winces at the intrusion, feeling the stretch. Evidence for just how long it's been since he was fucked last. But he doesn't want to think about that. This is now, with Hannibal. He wants to be here. He groans, a mixture of pleasure and pain as Hannibal inserts the digit further and adds a second.

Hannibal's free hand is on his cock, stroking languidly, keeping him hard but not giving him enough stimulation to reach orgasm. But he doesn't mind, still unsure if he'll be able to come anyway. He hasn't since his release, but now he really, really wants to. The desire burns through him like fire, and it feels almost overwhelming.

Hannibal's skilled fingers open him up and search for his prostate. He knows when he finds it because Will lets out another moan, his cock twitching. Will had never really tried to find his own prostate, choosing instead to pleasure his cock when jerking off. The only time he can recall having his prostate stimulated directly was at the compound. The thought makes his erection flag a little bit.

"Are you alright?" Hannibal asks, feeling the slight change in Will's demeanor.

"Yes," Will answers. He is fine. He's not going to let his trauma ruin this.

He sighs, relaxing once more as Hannibal brushes against his prostate a few more times before withdrawing his fingers. Will watches Hannibal role the condom over his cock and line himself up with Will's hole. He sinks into the tight heat slowly, stopping and allowing Will to adjust before moving more. Once he's seated inside fully, he grasps Will's cock and jerks him off slowly, making him harden more.

Hannibal begins moving slowly, timing his thrusts with the way he strokes Will's cock. He leans down, kissing Will for a moment before beginning to speed up his thrusts and changing the angle of his hips to hit Will's prostate.

Will cries out, overtaken by pleasure, feeling Hannibal's cock brush against his prostate with each thrust. He feels as if he's being assaulted by pleasure, both inside and outside. He'd never known being fucked could feel quite like this, though he doesn't think he's ever loved anyone he's fucked like he loves Hannibal. That's what he thinks about as he feels his orgasm building slowly in his belly, spreading to his chest, even down to the tip of his toes. He hasn't been this *close* in weeks. He wants it, *fuck* he wants it.

Hannibal speeds up more, stroke Will's cock faster. He knows he isn't going to last much longer, but he wants to get Will off before he finishes. Will's back arches up off the bed, and his eyes close. His mouth falls open in a moan as he comes, white streaks painting his torso and Hannibal's hand, making a mess between them. He comes for a long time—or maybe it just feels that way. It's the most he's ever felt an orgasm. Never before feeling one spread from his chest all the way down to his toes. The feeling is addicting. His mind is fuzzy with pleasure, but he feels it when Hannibal comes inside him.

He wishes they'd forgone the condom, but he figures it was a smart call. He doesn't want to have to deal with that kind of clean up before he goes under cover tomorrow. Both of their cocks spent and softening, they lay together, Hannibal on top of him, still inside him. Eventually, he gets up and takes the condom off, disposing of it in the bedside trashcan.

Will grabs his hand before he can walk away, looking up at him with nothing short of adoration.

“Fuck, I love you.” Will says, closing his eyes like it’s a prayer.

“I love you, too.” Hannibal replies, feeling his heart squeeze.

“If I don’t make it out of this, I just—I just wanted you to know that.” Will says somberly.

“You’ll make it out. If you don’t, I’ll kill them all. Every last one of them.” Hannibal says. It’s a promise.

Chapter 8

Hands zip tied behind his back, collar snug around his neck, and a bag over his head, Will wonders if he may have gotten himself in over his head. They'd staged his capture by Hannibal thoroughly, in the event anyone from Mason's operation had their eye on him. So now, Will is in the backseat of Hannibal's Bentley too afraid to speak. He's not scare of Hannibal—hasn't been in weeks, but this situation hits too close to home, reminding him of being purchased by Hannibal. He still doesn't have any memory of the first time he was taken, having been drugged.

He worries the recording device in his collar will be discovered—or worse, fail. Making the whole operation for nothing. He resolves that even if he doesn't make it out of this alive, they'll at least have the evidence they'll need to arrest and prosecute Mason, and hopefully Cordell as well. Hannibal tries talking to Will as they make the drive to Muskrat Farm, but he's too afraid to speak in more than one word answers.

"We could turn back, you know. If this is too much." Hannibal says quietly.

"Don't tempt me," Will says in a poor attempt at humor.

Too quickly, he feels the tires begin driving on a gravel road, signaling they've reached their destination. He feels the car stop and a voice through a speaker.

"State your name and business." The disembodied voice says.

"Dr. Hannibal Lecter, I'm returning something of Mason's." Hannibal says, staying somewhat vague.

There's a pause, and then the gate opens. They drive through around to the back of the massive home Mason lives in. They're greeted by two large men, Will guesses, going by the sound of their footsteps and voices. He hears the car door open, and he's pulled roughly from the backseat. He stumbles, his knees landing hard against the gravel. Two men grab him and lead him away, out of earshot of Mason and Hannibal.

"What do we have here?" Mason exclaims. "I thought that one got loose."

"He did. But I happened upon him this morning. Decided I'd bring him back."

"We don't offer refunds. Keep it." Mason says.

"I don't want him. He's too rebellious. I thought your people trained them better than that. The others I bought didn't behave this way." Hannibal responds.

Mason stands there, his face pensive. Likely deciding on the best course of action with Hannibal. He is a valued client and brings in a sizable amount of profit to the organization. Perhaps it would be best for Mason to accept the return.

“I had come to believe you did not mind a rebellious one, since you keep coming back and I’m fairly certain the ones you buy end up dead anyway. I had entertained the idea that you just like to kill them.” Mason muses.

“That *was* true, but I am now looking for someone more… long term.” Hannibal says.

“Fine! I’ll take him back, recalibrate him—and then return him to you. How does that sound?” Mason asks.

“And how much is that going to cost me?”

“Free of charge. Consider it a thank you for being a loyal customer.” Mason says, smiling.

Hannibal smiles, outstretching his hand to shake Mason’s, “I will eagerly await his return.”

Hannibal turns to leave, scowling at the interaction with Mason. Before Will, this never bothered him—at least not to the extent it does now. It’s unfortunate how Will has made him care, awakened something inside him he’d thought was long dead. He finds that he wants to see Mason brought to justice, to have the entire operation shut down—if for no reason other than the fact they hurt Will. He’s nothing if not possessive of what’s his.

A leaden weight settles in his stomach as he drives away from Muskrat Farm. He worries for Will, but tries to assuage his anxiety with the knowledge that they intend to return Will to him. But how will he be once he’s out? Will there be any of his Will left?

———

Will had been immediately led away from Hannibal and he finds himself underground once more, cool cement underneath his feet. The cover over his head is still in place and his arms are secured behind his back. The plastic begins to hurt where it’s digging into his wrists. They usher him into a room where they finally remove the cover.

He blinks, eyes struggling to adjust to the fluorescent lights above him. He recognizes the men in front of them. They’re some of the trainers he remembers dealing with, though he can’t recall anything more than that. His mind has done what it could to block out the memories.

“This doesn’t usually happen, you know.” One man says.

Will doesn’t speak. Knows he’s not supposed to. He can guess what they mean though.

“We should be taking you out back and putting a bullet in that pretty little head of yours, but we have to follow the boss’ orders.” The other man says.

It sounds like a threat, and Will can’t stop the way his body trembles. He hasn’t always been particularly excited about living, but he knows he doesn’t want to die. He wonders what Hannibal and Mason spoke of, since he’d been taken away almost as soon as they’d arrived.

“First thing’s first, let’s get you cleaned up.”

Will frowns. They hadn't done this very often when he was here before. Maybe they've improved their hygiene practices, he thinks. He doesn't say a word as they lead him down the cement corridor to a new shower room—if it can even be called that. They push him to the middle of the room so that he's standing on top of grates that dig into the soles of his bare feet. He shifts his weight from one foot to the other to ease the pain it causes.

They don't bother taking his collar off and he finds himself wondering if the recording device he's been outfitted with is waterproof. He hopes it is. All of his coherent thoughts leave him at once when the painfully cold water is pointed at him. The water pressure is high and they point it *everywhere* leaving him shivering and barely able to stand. After he's drenched, one guard comes over and begins scrubbing him clean. The cloth used leaves red marks over his body but he stays still.

They clean his cock, paying more attention to it than they should be, but he supposes he should get used to that again. The testosterone he's been on makes his cock respond to the stimulation and for once, he hates that he's on it. He hates having his body betray him in this way, his cock filling with blood as the guard jerks him off.

"Damn, this is way easier than it used to be. Are you seeing this, Gabe?" The guard stroking him says.

The other man's name is Gabe, maybe short for Gabriel? Will thinks, filing it away for future use. He feels put on display already, being gawked at for having relatively normal sexual function isn't something he'd thought would ever happen to him. He knows it will stop, since they obviously won't continue the testosterone injections in here, but it can't stop soon enough.

He hates thinking that these men remember him. They probably think back to their time here as positive. It makes him sick, but he knows he can't be upset over that. There'll be plenty more to be upset about. Men remembering him and someone jerking him off aren't worth it.

Now clean and his cock hanging full and heavy between his legs, they lead him out of the shower room and into another room. It looks like a medical examination room. Now, his fear response is more pronounced and he can't help but pull against the guards holding him by the arms. He looks around wildly, deciding in this moment, he *can't* do this. *Fuck, he cannot do this.*

His internal panic unknown to the guards, they cut the zip tie and free his wrists only to then strap him onto the chair in the middle of the room and leave him. He tests the strength of his bindings, finding that they're secure. He's not getting up until they let him up. His head jerks upward when he hears the door open.

"Well, Mr. Graham, I didn't think I'd get the pleasure of seeing you again," Cordell says, entering the room.

"Fuck you." Will spits, knowing he shouldn't, but he had to do *something*.

"What a dirty mouth you have on you. How should I punish you for that?" Cordell wonders aloud. "Perhaps I could take your tongue, since you seem so keen on using it for things it

should no longer do."

Will's mouth stays shut. He imagines what it would be like to have his tongue removed, and it isn't a thought he wants to entertain further.

"Maybe I could take your legs, to keep you from running off again, hm? Or maybe I could turn you into an eunuch. I've *always* wanted to do that, but Mason never lets me." Cordell muses, a pout on his face. "Apparently buyers would find it to be a turn off…"

"What would Mason say if I were to shave you, and perhaps my hand slips? Maybe the damage is too severe to salvage? Leaving amputation to be the best course of action?"

Will feels tears welling up in his eyes. He hadn't considered that he'd be brought to Cordell again once he was returned to the compound. How naive could he be?

Cordell's gloved hand grabs his cock, now entirely flaccid, and holds it at the base, "You'd look so lovely entirely smooth, wouldn't you?"

Cordell drops his cock with a frown and turns to prepare something Will cannot see. He turns back around with a large syringe, and Will knows what it is. It's another microchip.

"You were a very bad boy, cutting this out." Cordell admonishes, sticking the needle into the base of Will's neck.

The sting is distracting, but it's over as quickly as it began. Will keeps his head pointed down, and doesn't speak. Doesn't know if there's anything he can say to make this less terrible. Cordell grabs his face, fingers digging into his jaw and looks him over.

"You have more facial hair than I'd have expected. Were you getting testosterone injections?"

"I—yes." Will answers nervously.

"Hmm," Cordell hums. "I imagine it was almost like being a real man again."

Will's eyes have tears pooling in them. He feels a panic attack beginning, surprised it had taken this long for it to happen. He doesn't get the chance to respond again because an obtrusive ball gag is shoved between his teeth and the leather strap is secured behind his head.

"You're much prettier like this," Cordell coos.

For a moment, Will thinks he's going to start touching him again, like he had the first time he'd met the doctor. But he doesn't, he turns and walks out of the room. The two guards from before come in next, gathering him up off the chair and into a pair of handcuffs, leaving the gag in his mouth.

He allows himself to be pushed along through the dark corridors but he looks up occasionally to see what he can see. There are many rooms through this hallway, not unlike prison cells with heavy steel doors and small windows near the top. The insides of the cells are dark, so he can't see what—or who resides inside.

When they turn the corner, these rooms are different and lack the feel of a prison. Will isn't sure if that's comforting or even more terrifying. He'd half hoped they'd just be throwing him in a cell and leaving him alone—but when has he ever been that lucky? The guards stop him in front of a door, pulling out a keycard to swipe for access, something he doesn't recall them doing when he was here before. Enhanced security measures, he thinks.

In the center of the room is a pillory-like device, though this one is lower to the ground and made of black metal. It's clear this one isn't to be used in the town square as a humiliation punishment. Of course this one here is for some kind of sex thing. Will rolls his eyes at the absurdity of it all.

The guards shove him forward, making him stumble and fall to his knees. He winces, the hard concrete unforgiving to his bones. He watches from his knees as they open up the pillory and take the handcuffs off him. Pulling him forward, they push his body so it's low enough for his head and arms to sit in the space provided for them, leaving him on his knees. At least there is padding on the contraption, though he doesn't know if that's a good thing. It probably means they intend for him to be here for a while.

The pillory closes around him, leaving little room for his neck and wrists to move, and making him feel claustrophobic. He's pointed away from the door, only able to stare at the blank, gray wall in front of him. He can't see anything that's happening behind him but he can hear, so he sighs with a modicum of relief when he hears the guards leave. Maybe they'll leave him alone. Maybe this—*predicament*, is the punishment.

He's not sure how long he's in the pillory for, his knees and jaw aching from the uncomfortable position. He drools helplessly around the ball gag, the device too large for his mouth. He stays quiet aside from the occasional groan of discomfort, but it doesn't matter. It isn't like anyone is in the room to punish him for making noise.

"This is going to be so much fun," Mason exclaims, coming into the room.

Will shuts his eyes, hating the way Mason's voice makes his body tremble. Out of fear, or hatred—he's not sure. Probably both. He hears the footsteps draw closer, and then Mason is standing in front of him but he can't lift his head to look up—even if he wanted to.

"It looks bad, you know. You escaping, running off like a disobedient little puppy." Mason chides. "We can't have that."

Will groans in response, unable to do anything else.

"I've put some thought into how I want you punished, and I decided—why not make your punishment everyone else's reward for a job well done?"

Then, a hand is behind his head and unclasping the ball gag. He closes his mouth, wishing he could rub his aching jaw. But at least the thing is no longer holding his mouth open.

"Am I supposed to act afraid? Maybe *repentant*?" Will growls.

“If you’re not afraid, that’s fine. But by the end of this, you’ll certainly be repentant. You’ll learn your place as the little cock slut I know you can be.”

“Instead of raping me, how about you just let me go?” Will says.

He knows he’s being stupid, saying things like that. But he also knows, the more he can get Mason to admit to, the better. Any extra suffering he experiences will be worth it.

“You’ve become a mouthy little whore. I’m beginning to regret taking the gag off. Hell, you’ll probably wish I hadn’t taken it off.” Mason laughs, “You know, it’s not rape because you’re not a person. You’re an object. This is all you’re good for.”

Mason strolls out of Will’s view and over to the table at the side of the room. Will hadn’t gotten a good look at it, so he doesn’t know what kind of things were on the table, but he hears Mason picking them up. When he makes his decision, he comes back over to Will, this time behind him where he can’t see what’s happening.

A cold hand is on his ass, kneading his cheeks. Will is repulsed by the feeling, wants to move away, but when he tries, it leaves his shoulders pressing painfully against the metal. He isn’t prepared for the first blow of the cane.

He screams, pain lighting up his nerve endings like a Christmas tree. One blow, two blows, three blows and now all he knows is pain. Red, hot, *inescapable* pain. He sobs openly, tears falling from his cheeks onto the concrete below as the blows continue. He loses count entirely after about a dozen, and thankfully, he begins to go numb. His mind trying to protect him from the torture of his body.

“Nice and red for me, now.” Mason says, examining his handiwork.

A lubed up finger is in his ass next, surprising Will because one, there’s lube, and two, it’s a finger—not a cock. He hadn’t expected any kind of prep for the assault he’d known was coming.

“I don’t want any lasting damage done to you, especially not here.” Mason says, working his finger in and out.

He adds another finger, scissoring Will open. He even crooks his fingers just right to brush against his prostate, making his uninterested cock twitch with newfound interest. The fingers are removed, and he hears the packaging of a condom being torn open. Then, the blunt head of Mason’s cock is at his hole, pressing inside.

Will groans at the intrusion, it doesn’t hurt so much as disgust him, but it’s difficult to make the distinction when so much *does* hurt. He listens to the slapping of Mason’s thighs against his cheeks, feeling the man inside him thrust more erratically and then still. Will feels the cock pulsate inside him as he comes, then Mason pulls out.

Will thinks he’s done, but Mason isn’t. He takes the condom and holds it above Will’s back, letting his semen leak out onto his bare skin. It drips down his ass, burning when it makes

contact with the inflamed skin there. He gags at the feeling, never feeling so *disgusting* in his life. He wants to scrub his skin raw, and never stop.

“Now you’re painted up like a cheap whore!” Mason laughs, walking out.

Will knows it would be too easy if this was it, so he braces himself for what comes next. And what *comes* next seems to be every man in the compound. He gets fucked so many times he loses count. Every one of them forgoes the condom, pulls out, and comes onto his back, leaving him a slimy mess. Some of them even try to grab at his cock, pumping it to full hardness. But he thinks he’s safe from reaching orgasm unwillingly, because he doesn’t even feel himself get close. Until one man strokes his cock and tilts his hips in the just the right way to hit his prostate, and embarrassingly quickly, Will comes over the man’s hand with his cock still in his ass. He cries out at that, a mixture of pain and pleasure. It’s *so much worse* when they make him enjoy it.

Over stimulated, his cock softening between his legs, he feels drained. The next man to fuck him is rough, shoving him as much as he will move into the metal keeping him in place. His shoulders ache from the constant pressure and he’s sure it’ll leave a bruise, but he doesn’t feel it acutely. His mind has retreated, he’s not completely in his body right now. The man reaches over the pillory and grabs a fistful of his hair, yanking his head up at an unnatural angle. Will cries out, the new pain blossoming in his scalp bringing him painfully into the present.

The man holds onto Will’s hair as he fucks into him, hips stuttering as he gets close to orgasm. The man’s grunts, and groans deepen as he slams his cock into Will’s overused, inflamed hole. It *hurts*.

“I’d buy you for myself if I could. You take my cock so well,” The man purrs.

Will recognizes the voice. It’s the guard—Gabe, who had escorted him into the compound along with the other one.

“Gabe? Is that short for Gabriel? Can you only get it up when your partner is unwilling?” Will taunts through gritted teeth.

His words anger the man fucking him, making him jerk his head back harder, then letting it go, causing Will’s chin to fall and hit the metal restraint hard. It jars him, leaving him with an ache in his teeth. He lies limply in the restraints as Gabe finishes, pulling his cock out and cumming on Will’s back like everyone else had.

After Gabe leaves, Will waits for the next one, but they don’t come. He doesn’t know how long he’s been in this room, being fucked by one man after another. It’s almost as if time doesn’t exist in here. Rather, the moments are measured by how much he’s suffered—not by minutes or hours.

He feels the cum drying on his back and it itches. His brain is fuzzy, and he thinks the worst thing about this contraption is that he can’t scratch his itches. Logically, he knows what’s worse is the continued assaults he’s been subjected to, but in an effort of self preservation, he can’t even *think* about it right now. Couldn’t even if he wanted to. His brain is working

overtime to block it out. He's so, so *tired*. And that's the last thing he's aware of before he passes out, body going entirely limp in the pillory.

Chapter 9

“We have to do something!” Hannibal yells, a rare show of the anger that bubbles beneath the surface.

“We have to wait, or else this will be for *nothing*.” Jack replies.

They’d been all but glued to Jack’s computer in his office, listening to the recordings coming through Will’s collar. They’re almost in realtime, having only about a minute delay between recording and being delivered to the computer. When it had begun, everyone was in the room, even Alana. But she’d left along with Brian when Will’s sobs became too loud to ignore.

Hannibal, Jack, Beverly, and Jimmy remain. It’s almost as if a sense of obligation has settled in the room—as if they have to stay here and listen to the torture. Like they need to experience the pain with Will. Though, Hannibal is here only to keep himself from going to Mason’s compound and ripping his throat out with his teeth, because that’s what he’d like to do. That’s the only justice that would be appropriate for such a despicable person.

It’s obvious what had been happening in the recordings, though nobody says it out right. They’d all known what Will was signing himself up for, even if they didn’t know exactly how it would happen. Listening to Will back talk his handlers bring forth an odd sense of pride in Beverly. For Will to be faced with such dire consequences, he’s still doing everything he can to gather evidence.

As it’s clear they’ve finished up with Will, everyone is glad that there is no video. The sounds are enough to bring forth waves of nausea in each of them, Hannibal included. Even as someone who relishes in the death of others, he isn’t a sadist in this way. He derives no enjoyment from this kind of pain—especially not when it’s directed at someone like Will.

He knows he has a soft spot for Will and it’s something that could very well get him into trouble. But, he’s found that trying to ignore it or trying to be indifferent towards the man only leads to a strengthening of the feeling. It’s almost as if Will is a drug and Hannibal is completely hooked. Always chasing a high.

“You should go. It’s getting late.” Jack says to everyone still in the office.

Jimmy and Beverly look at each other frowning. They’re exhausted, and it is late. Jack is exhausted, too. But he isn’t going to leave. Someone needs to be monitoring the feed 24/7. Jack has deemed himself to be the one for the job.

“We’ll be back first thing in the morning.” Beverly promises, and the pair turn and leave.

“You too, Doctor Lecter.” Jack says tiredly.

“I am staying. You’ll have to have me forcibly removed if you want me to leave.” Hannibal says, his tone brokering no argument.

Jack sighs, looking up at the equally exhausted man, “Why do you care so much for your patient?”

“He’s more than a patient to me.” Hannibal admits.

He knows it’s unethical, he knows nothing about their relationship has ever been ethical, but he doesn’t care. And perhaps people should know. He doesn’t feel like he should have to hide his feelings for Will—at least not to the people who are the closest thing Will has to family.

Jack is looking at him, seeming to try and make sense of what he’s just said. His brows are furrowed and he doesn’t say anything for several moments. It’s unclear to himself and to Hannibal if he’s actually upset at the revelation.

“You and Will?” Jack finally asks, unbelieving of what he’s heard. “I didn’t even know he was gay.”

Hannibal wants to clarify, to say he isn’t gay, Will is bisexual. But he supposes it doesn’t matter much, the schematics of their relationship really shouldn’t be on the forefront of their minds right now. They turn their attention to the computer, as Will begins to stir. He’d lost consciousness (they think) a few hours ago, and it’d been quiet ever since.

Will comes to with a groan. He aches. His entire body feels like one big bruise. His ass is on fire and he can still feel the copious amounts of cum drying on his back. He’s still in the pillory and still naked. But he’s alone, and he supposes he should be glad for that.

As he comes back to himself, he starts to shiver, his teeth chattering uncontrollably. It’s a little cold in the room he’s in, but he thinks it might be because of shock. The way his body had been abused for what felt like an eternity couldn’t have been easy on his nervous system. He tries to adjust himself in his restraints, but there’s little he can do to try and ease the ache in his shoulders. He sighs, closing his eyes and trying his best to go to his stream.

“Is the disobedient little puppy awake?” Gabe coos, walking into the room after another hour.

Will is awake, has been for a while. He sighs, cracking open his eyes, though it’s useless. All he sees in front of him is still the blank cement wall of the room. Gabe is behind him. There’s a slap on his ass, making him breathe raggedly. The sting feels amplified from how sore he is already.

“Answer me, puppy.”

“I’m—I’m awake.” Will croaks, his voice rough from sobbing.

“Mason wants me to clean you up for your next training session.”

Gabe frees him of his confines and lifts Will to his feet. He stumbles, unsteady on his feet after so many hours kneeling in the pillory. He allows himself to be steadied and led from the room, down the corridor and into the shower room. He gets situated on the grates and hosed off, the cold water exacerbating his shivering.

Thoroughly washed, he's grabbed again and walked down the hallway. He's exhausted and finds himself almost tripping over his feet. He's too tired to notice they don't restrain his hands. A door opens, and Gabe shoves him inside. As the door closes behind him, he's left in the room. He looks around, seeing a thin mattress on the floor, a bucket, and a thin blanket.

Shivering, he reaches for the blanket, wrapping it around his naked form. They hadn't given him one when he was here before. He's not sure why he was given one now. Will they want him to *pay* for it? The only way he can pay is with his body. He wonders how long the FBI is going to let him stay here. How long will they listen to his torment? *Are they even listening?*

He gets a few hours to himself before his door opens and Mason walks inside alongside Gabe. He fights the urge to groan, to back himself up against the wall and refuse to move. He knows if he does that, they'll only hurt him more. But maybe it would be worth out. Maybe they'd knock him out for whatever they have planned next.

Against his own wishes, he finds himself standing and offering his wrists for them to cuff. He's led without argument down the corridor and into a new room. At least there's no breeding bench or pillory, he thinks. But there is a Saint Andrews Cross against the wall, and he sickens thinking of what they might want to do to him on there.

Gabe shoves Will forward to the cross, he turns with his back to it and lets them fasten the leather restraints on his wrists and ankles. There's an additional strap that goes around his waist as well. He's entirely immobilized and at their mercy. That is perhaps the worst part of it all, being completely helpless in stopping what's being done. There are no safe words here. He doesn't get a say in this scene. He's not a person here.

Gabe lubes up a toy—a prostate vibrator and kneels between Will's legs. The toy slides in with ease, since he's still loose from being fucked so many times. The toy settles in his ass and it's *fine*. It's just sitting against his prostate and he's not feeling much in the way of arousal. His cock continues to lie flaccid between his legs, but Gabe takes it in his hand and strokes it, getting it half hard.

Again, without fail, Will's body betrays him. It chases a pleasure he doesn't want. A pleasure that makes him sick. He closes his eyes. Forcing him to enjoy this makes it exponentially worse. It seems as if they're using the fact he's been on testosterone against him. Making him come didn't seem like a priority when he was here before, but now, he suspects that's exactly what they want from him.

The toy begins to vibrate and Will groans, his cock twitching helplessly. There's already a bead of precum forming at the head and he knows it's going to be a long day—or night? He's not sure. There are no windows here. Mason watches, a predatory smile on his face. He'd already done something Will hadn't expected by fucking him. It didn't seem like his brand to toy with the product. But, he supposes his situation is different.

Mason gets bored, leaving Will in the hands of Gabe. Someone else comes into the room, but Will can't make himself open his eyes to see who. His face is painfully red, flushed with both arousal and shame. A hand brushes his curls from his forehead, it's a soft hand, *feminine?*

He cracks his eyes open, seeing Margot in front of him. The nurse from *before*. His eyes widen further, unable to comprehend what he's seeing.

"What are you doing?" Gabe asks, voice hushed.

"I'm making sure he's alright. You don't want to leave lasting damage, do you?" She replies angrily.

"He's enjoying it. I'm not hurting him. At least not right now." Gabe smiles, toying with the remote for the toy currently tormenting Will.

Margot wants to ask when the last time Will was fed, or given anything to drink, but she doesn't want to seem to invested. He hasn't been here long enough to be severely dehydrated.

She is aware of what's happening, Hannibal having given her the heads up Will would be coming back. She'd promised she'd do what she could for him, but given her position, it isn't much. She feels constantly at her brother's feet, the heel of his boot on her throat.

She sighs, stepping back, and leaving Will to his torment. He can't help himself as she leaves, letting out a keening whine. For more, for less, for *something*—he's not sure. It isn't because she's left, Gabe had increased the intensity when she turned away, making his thighs shake and his entire body shiver with unwanted pleasure.

Will's cock is leaking steadily now. His brain only letting him think about how close he is to release, and how much it begins to hurt when Gabe turns the toy intensity down when he thinks he might tumble over the edge. He sobs, but he won't beg. He knows that's what they want him to do.

"This could be over if you just learn to beg like a good puppy." Gabe coos, as if reading Will's mind.

"Go to hell," Will groans.

"Naughty puppy!" Gabe laughs, approaching Will.

Gabe takes Will's cock in hand, stroking it up and down. The man's hand is rough, unforgiving against the sensitive skin of his shaft. He turns the toy down, strokes Will's cock a few more times and stops. He turns the toy back on, leaving Will a leaking, sobbing mess. He can't come untouched, not like this. He knows it, and Gabe must know it, too.

His body is tightly coiled like a spring, and the best way to make this be less painful is to just *let go*. He takes stock of his body, starting with his shoulders. The muscles there are taught, almost spasming. He focuses his energy on tensing the muscles, holding his breath, and then exhaling and relaxing the muscles of his shoulders. Once they're relaxed, he moves down his spine, to his gluteal muscles, down his thighs, and even his calves. The process is something he'd learned in therapy—paired muscle relaxation for his anxiety, but it has proven useful for this, too.

By the time he finishes, his body is completely lax, the restraints holding him up entirely. The toy is still vibrating, but he's detached himself from his corporal form. He feels the toy, but it isn't having the same impact on him. His cock is still hard, but it doesn't seem as important. He can exist like this for much longer than he could exist as he was, coiled too tightly, feeling like he might explode.

With his quivering, shaking, and begging ceased, Gabe gets bored. Most people he does this to don't behave this way, but Will is special. Nothing about this is normal. So perhaps he needs to employ new methods. The restrained man has steeled himself to the cruelty of this place. But what would he do if he were shown kindness?

That might mess with him even more than torture. Gabe grins, turns and walks out of the room to find Mason. Will's eyes open when the door shuts. He's in the room alone, the toy still inside him but turned off. He wonders if he should be concerned about this—he's sure he did not behave the way they wanted him to.

"It's too quiet." Hannibal says.

"If they had hurt him, we would have heard something." Jack tells him, though he might just be trying to convince himself too.

"How much longer are we going to do this for?" Beverly asks.

"If we were to go in now and get Will, all we have Mason on is rape. With his lawyers and money, he'll get out of that charge and be back at work the same day."

Nobody likes this. But a look shared between everyone seems to show agreement. They have to let this continue a while longer, Will knew what he was getting into and they need to respect that.

"Is anyone else in the FBI even aware of what's going on here?" Hannibal asks.

"Only a few. Since we don't know who is on Mason's payroll." Jack says.

Chapter 10

"How is he?" Hannibal asks as soon as Margot picks up the phone later that day.

"He's… hanging in there." She answers hesitantly, the pun not intended since he is still *hanging* on the St. Andrew's Cross.

Jack doesn't know about Margot, and he doesn't know Hannibal is in contact with her. But he couldn't stomach the idea of Will being in there entirely alone. He's under no illusion that Margot would do anything to protect Will, but hopefully she will tell him if it seems that Will is in mortal danger.

"Do you know what else they have planned for him?" Hannibal asks.

"I've heard them talking—Mason and Cordell. They want to train him, make him obedient, like a dog." Margot admits. *"They think they're doing you a favor, making him into something that'll please you."*

Hannibal swallows thickly. He wonders if Will's treatment would be better if he hadn't been involved in the operation. He knows that's likely not the case, Will would probably be dead, but he can't help but think.

"They aren't feeding him. And I don't think he's staying hydrated." Margot reveals.

Hannibal's face morphs into a snarl. Mason should know better than to let Will die of dehydration. He's not stupid. Hannibal calms himself, telling himself that it is in Mason's best interest that he keeps Will alive.

"Thank you, Margot." Hannibal says, ending the call.

Mason had immediately dismissed Gabe's idea of killing Will with kindness. Leaving Gabe disgruntled and stalking back to the room in which Will is restrained. He isn't surprised when he gets there to see Will unconscious, but stirring at the noise of the door opening.

Will cracks open his eyes, realizing he'd fallen asleep at some point. The toy is off, the battery likely dead. He feels an odd sense of pride in himself for resisting the pleasure he did not want. For once, it felt like his body was his own—even in this place, where *nothing* is his. He'll cling to that feeling and it's what will help him through this.

Even with his small victory, he feels himself getting close to breaking. As if at any moment something inside him is going to snap and he's going to get out of his binds and massacre everyone. He knows it wouldn't actually work that way. These men have weapons, he just has his hands. His hands—and his teeth. He could sink his teeth into their jugulars and watch them bleed out, but he wouldn't be able to do that to everyone. And besides, that'd probably land him in the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

Gabe and another trainer get him off the cross and clip a leash to his collar. They hadn't done that in the past, mostly ignoring the collar thankfully. But now, it seems there was some meaning in the term Gabe had used with him. *'Puppy'* , they said.

"Puppies don't walk on two legs," Gabe says, shoving Will to the ground unexpectedly, making his knees smack against the cement.

Will growls at the men, not unlike a dog, he thinks dryly. He remains on all fours, crawling along to avoid a tug on the leash. The collar has already rubbed the skin beneath it raw. Every tug feels even more painful. He won't complain about that, won't even touch the collar. He doesn't want to draw any unnecessary attention to it.

Gabe leads him along, down the corridor that seems infinitely longer than it had when he was walking it on two legs. They get to an office at the end. The inside is a stark contrast to the facility. The floor is a plush, maroon carpet, the walls are lined with shelves housing books and nicknacks that probably cost more than an entire year of Will's salary. The desk in the middle is a rich mahogany color. Everything in the room screams opulence. It's Mason's office, and he strolls in with a grin on his face.

"Is my puppy hungry?" Mason coos.

Will is hungry. His stomach growls loudly as if on cue.

"Yes." He answers.

"Excuse me? Puppies don't speak." Mason chastises, kicking Will in the ribs. "Try again."

Will's face goes red with humiliation as he barks. Woofing once, twice, three times—like a fucking dog. Mason seems appeased by the gesture, and sets down a stainless steel bowl full of dog food. Will looks down at the bowl, knowing he wouldn't even feed his dogs this gruel. He risks looking upward toward Mason. Perhaps this is some kind of joke.

"Beggars can't be choosers," Mason says. "Eat."

Swallowing thickly, Will looks back down towards the wet dog food. It's a brown color, with chunks of what might be carrots—and peas? He moves to grab some food from the bowl with his hand, but is stopped by another swift kick in the ribs by Mason.

"Ah, ah, puppies don't eat with their paws."

He's reached the ultimate level of humiliation he thinks. It *can't* get any worse. His stomach growls loudly, seemingly unaware of the food he's about to put into his mouth. He's so hungry even the dog food is beginning to smell appetizing. And with that thought, he leans in, sticking his mouth into the bowl and takes a small bite. The food is cold, and tastes vaguely of chicken. He closes his eyes and eats quickly, but not too quickly, for fear of vomiting it all up. He's sure Mason wouldn't like that.

By the time the bowl is clean, Will feels worse. He was starving but the food settles in his gut like a brick. His stomach gurgles, not of hunger, but in protest of the food it's been given.

“You must be thirsty now, right?”

Will barks in response. He knows if he gets another kick, he might vomit it all up. It wouldn’t surprise him if Mason would make him eat it. He barks again, and if he had a tail, he’d wag it.

Mason pours a bottle of water into the clean bowl and Will greedily leans forward and laps up the water as quickly as he can. The water is lukewarm at best, but the liquid feels wonderful sliding down his throat. He gets most of the water finished before there’s a tug on his leash. He glances in Mason’s direction. The man is standing at the doorway with his leash.

Will gives one last longing look to his bowl of water and crawls toward Mason. He leads him down the corridor once more, and it feels even harder now that there’s some food and water sloshing around inside him. He hopes Mason doesn’t intend to fuck him right now.

But of course Will isn’t that lucky. Mason pulls him along and into the room with the breeding bench. At least this is moderately more comfortable than the pillory they’d put him in earlier. He obediently gets up on the bench, not having the energy to struggle. He just wants to be *done* .

“Do you like this, puppy? Jumping up here all on your own. We have to force most puppies up here!” Mason exclaims.

Will woofs lowly. He doesn’t know what he’s supposed to say, so at least the woof can be interpreted in any way Mason wants it to be. Cordell comes in after he’s fastened to the bench, and the large man’s hands begin feeling over his body. He tenses at the touch, swearing it feels like it burns when Cordell touches him. He whines, whether because he’s supposed to be a dog or because it’s the only sound he can utter that won’t end in him sobbing he doesn’t know.

“The boss doesn’t usually let me play with the toys, but he said this was a special case. And you’re my absolute favorite.” Cordell hums, his hands kneading Will’s cheeks.

His hand ventures south, his finger stroking Will’s castration scar. He can’t contain a shudder at the intimate touch. This feels more violating than anything else they could do to him. Will internally panics, tugging minutely at his restraints. He hears the cap pop off a tube of lubricant and he can’t help but try and pull away. A finger coated with lube breaches him without preamble. He’s not tight, not after everything they’ve put inside him since he’s been here, but the sting is still there. He sucks in a pained breath, wondering if this hurts more because of *who* is doing it.

The finger begins thrusting in and out of him, and Cordell’s other hand comes up to continue stroking Will’s scar. The doctor increases his pressure on the scar and it nauseates Will when the touch begins to feel nice. He lets out a weak whine, going lax against his restraints. It gives both Cordell and Mason the impression that he is just going to take it. Not that he can get loose anyway—or so they think.

When Will feels Cordell's cock head pressing against his hole, he moves, freeing his arms from the restraints Mason didn't fasten properly. He rears up, making Cordell stumble backwards. He unfastens the ankle restraints and he's free. The look in his eyes is murderous. He feels murderous. He wasn't sure what would do it and it turns out involving Cordell, the mere idea of the man fucking—raping—him, was too much. He doesn't care if he ends up in the BSHCI. They have to die.

He pounces on Cordell first, sinking his teeth into the fat of his neck. He tastes the coppery liquid in his mouth before he releases the man. Cordell stumbles backward, hands flying up to his profusely bleeding neck. Will wasn't sure if he'd actually gotten to the jugular, with Cordell's large neck, but it seems he did. He doesn't let himself become mesmerized by the blood pooling at Cordell's feet, or the way the man's choking and gurgling sounds like music to his ears.

He turns to Mason, growling—an almost inhuman sound, and corners him at the back of the room. Mason had been utterly shocked at Will's escape and hadn't taken his chance to escape the room while he could. He's no match for Will with his rage and adrenaline coursing through his veins. He pounces on Mason, making both of them tumble to the floor. Will pins Mason beneath him, smiling down wickedly at the man.

"You know, you abuse a dog enough and they eventually turn on their masters." Will says, punching Mason in the face.

He relishes the feeling of the bone crushing beneath his knuckles, feels victorious seeing the blood flow from the man's face. He punches him again and again, hearing the satisfying squelch of flesh as the skin breaks and gashes from where his fists collide the hardest. Mason holds onto consciousness for longer than Will expected, but that's fine. He reaches down, materializing his earlier fantasy, and sinks his teeth into MAson's neck. This time, there's no doubt on whether or not he gets the jugular. He lets the liquid fill his mouth before removing his teeth.

He spits the blood over Mason's face, and stands. Watching the two men die from blood loss is more cathartic than he'd ever imagined it would be. He feels no regret, no remorse. The world is better off without them. He knows the FBI was listening, knows they'd know Will killed them. He doesn't care.

"They're dead." Will rasps, talking to the FBI for the first time since he'd been taken to the compound.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Neither Jack or Hannibal needed Will to elaborate. They'd listened to the altercation, hearing Will fight for his life made both of them ill. Immediately, Jack called and ordered the FBI to mobilize, to get Will out and to raid the compound. They leave after that, heading to the location as well.

When the FBI arrives at the compound, it looks unassuming from the outside. Most of the facility is underground and it's possible no one inside has any idea that the FBI is outside. Nonetheless, they can't wait so they go inside, force entry into the underground portion and begin detaining the employees. They find Will standing in the room with the breeding bench, drenched with blood and both Cordell's and Mason's lifeless bodies lying beneath him.

"Will?" Hannibal breathes, unsure if he is being heard.

Will sways on his feet, feeling the exertion of the murders and the torture catching up to him. He numbly looks forward—and is that *Hannibal?* He must be hallucinating, he thinks before falling to the ground unconscious. Hannibal rushes forward, past the bodies and to the man he loves. He loves him so much it hurts. He'd spent every hour *worried* about Will. Still shaken at the fact he can worry this much about another person.

"Did we push him too far?" Jack asks, making his way inside the room and looking at the scene before him.

"No. They did." Hannibal replies, now cradling Will's head and wiping his curls from his forehead.

"We're going to have to bring him in. He killed two people, Hannibal." Jack says, as if Hannibal doesn't know.

He wants to turn, stab Jack in the throat and leave with Will. To take him away from all of this, but he doesn't. He lets Jack call in the EMTs and an agent to escort Will to the hospital. He doesn't let Hannibal ride with Will, but he hopes he is there when Will awakens.

No longer needed at the scene, he gets in his car and heads to the hospital they're taking Will to. He gets stuck in traffic, but Will is still unconscious when he gets there. They'd cleaned him up, the blood covering him now gone. He's dressed in a clean white hospital gown and it looks like he's just resting peacefully, aside from the handcuffs that have him chained down to the bed.

The agents stationed outside his room had thankfully let Hannibal in, since he is technically (but not really), Will's psychiatrist. He sits in the chair next to the bed, and grabs Will's unrestrained hand, stroking the swollen knuckles with the pads of his fingers.

When Will wakes up the next day, he first notices he's lying on a bed. Not the cold floor of a cell, on a breeding bench, or hanging suspended on the X-cross. He thinks that he must be dreaming. It feels like there's cotton stuffed inside his head and his mouth is so dry. He aches in places no one should ever ache and that's what makes him decide he must be awake and *alive* .

Before alerting anyone that he's awake, he tries to get his bearings. He hears the beeping of machines, and the room he's in smells of disinfectant. He can feel an IV in the juncture of his elbow and a cannula in his nose. He then focuses on the rest of his body and he feels the cool metal of handcuffs on one wrist. His mind is still fuzzy on the details of what happened and how he ended up here.

Finally, he cracks his eyes open and is met with almost blinding fluorescent lights. He hadn't liked them before, and he definitely doesn't like them now after waking up from sleep (or a coma?). They're so bright and distracting and the buzzing noise they emit could drive him insane if he focuses on it too much.

He endeavors to keep his eyes open as he looks around the room. Off to the side, slumped over in a chair, he sees Hannibal. The man is asleep but he looks utterly exhausted. Will wonders what he's put him through for them to have ended up here.

"Hannibal?" He croaks out, voice rough from disuse.

The man is a light sleeper, and just the whisper of his name makes him stir. He opens his eye and looks directly at Will. He looks relieved to see the other man conscious.

"How are you feeling?" Hannibal asks.

"Could be better. Everything hurts." Will replies with a dry laugh.

Hannibal's hand finds Will's once more and he takes it in his own. Will's eyes shut almost involuntarily at the pleasant, *kind* touch. Will squeezes his hand in an effort to comfort Hannibal, even though he's the one that probably needs the comfort more. But the bags beneath the other man's eyes make Will's heart ache. He knows he's the cause even if he's not entirely sure what he's done. Given the cuff on his wrist, he's sure it's nothing good. He knows he was back inside Mason's compound, but the last thing he recalls is that he was strapped to the breeding bench.

"What do you remember, Will?"

There it is. The question that he's already been mulling over.

"I was at the compound. On the breeding bench. Then, nothing." Will replies, brows furrowed in thought.

Hannibal thinks it over. He should probably tell Will what happened before Jack gets wind of him being conscious.

"You kill Mason and Cordell. *With your teeth.* " Hannibal tells him.

Will's eyes widen. *Cordell.* It all comes back to him at once, like an avalanche. He'd been strong, taking whatever they'd given him. But then, Cordell got a turn and the anger he was keeping at bay flowed through his veins like white hot fire. Freeing himself from the poorly secured restraints, he killed Cordell first and then Mason.

He waits for the onslaught of emotion, for the pain of a flashback–but neither comes. Instead, he feels satisfied in a way he hadn't known he needed. The world seems just a little bit brighter knowing those men are no longer living.

Jack comes into the room before either of them speak again. He looks angry. Of course he's angry. He likes doing things by the book and murder isn't exactly *by the book* .

"You killed two people, Will." Jack says.

"It was self defense." Will replies.

"I know. And the prosecutor I played the recording for agreed. They're not pressing charges."

Jack moves to remove the cuff from Will's wrist. He doesn't flinch or feel anything from Jack's touch. Is he so traumatized he's numb to everything, or still in some kind of shock? He's not sure.

After Jack leaves, the doctor comes in. Will is being discharged with the recommendation that he have someone stay with him for a few days. Instead, he plans to go to Hannibal's. If the man will have him, of course.

It's still funny to him that he finds comfort in Hannibal. The same man that bought him and held him captive. Now, he goes to the man's home willingly. *Wants* to be there.

He opens his mouth to ask if he can go home with Hannibal, but he closes it. He doesn't want to impose, and maybe Hannibal doesn't want him there anymore. Maybe Will isn't the man he loves anymore. The thought squeezes at his heart painfully. So he waits to see if Hannibal is going to invite him to stay.

He doesn't. And Will does his best to not be upset, but he is. He's sure he can care for himself on his own, but he doesn't want to. He wants to be with Hannibal. But he can't blame the other man for being hesitant. Will is used up, a hollow shell of who he once was. He knows that, and maybe Hannibal has figured it out as well.

Once the discharge paperwork is complete, Will is wheeled out of the hospital in a wheelchair despite his protests that he can walk. Hannibal follows along, his eyes trained on Will the entire time. He's surprised that Will doesn't seem to want to stay with him while he recovers. But, given the man's recent traumas, he isn't going to think too much of it. He'll give Will all the space he needs.

Hannibal drives Will home, and neither man speaks. Will is obviously stuck in his own head. Hannibal worries briefly that perhaps he shouldn't leave Will on his own. He doesn't have a good grasp of the man's current psychological state, but in an effort to give Will the control he so desperately wants, he pushes the worry aside.

“Thanks,” Will mumbles once they arrive at his home in Wolf Trap.

Once Will is alone in his home, he slides down the front door, not caring about the cry being ripped from his throat. It sounds *worse* than it had when he was being *tortured* . All because he thinks Hannibal no longer wants him. If he’d been more level headed, he’d have known Hannibal was being distant for his own benefit, but everything feels like a rejection now.

Standing from his spot in front of the door, he winces, feeling the pain of his injuries as he moves. Trudging to the bathroom, he looks at himself in the mirror. He’s cracking. The man he sees looking back at him seems like a stranger. He’s rejected himself. And it *hurts* .

He’s never been one for self-pity but he’s feeling it now, along with the cavernous, aching, emptiness that has set up residence in his chest. He wonders if he can ever show his face in public again. *Will everyone he meets see the same cracks he sees? Does Hannibal see it?* He must.

Will needs something, anything to numb the pain he’s feeling. Anything to make him feel just a little less flayed open. With that thought, he strides into his kitchen, opening the cabinet door and retrieving a bottle of whiskey. It’s peach flavored, but that doesn’t matter as he pops the lid off and chugs half the bottle down. Feeling the burn in his throat and the warmth in his stomach, he knows relief is right around the corner.

The alcohol works its magic quickly, and soon Will feels numb. His face tingles and the warmth in his stomach has spread across his limbs. He grabs the bottle once more and chugs more of it down. If he were thinking rationally, he’d know he would regret the decision. But as it is, he is only desperate for relief.

Unfortunately, the physical warmth and numbness don’t seem to translate to his head, or to the ache in his chest. He can’t stop thinking about Hannibal. It’s odd that he’s where all his thoughts go. He’s well and truly traumatized by his experiences, and yet he’s here having a breakdown because he feels rejected. *Pathetic* , he thinks to himself bitterly.

Soon, the warmth and numbness evolve into something more sinister. Will feels himself struggling to maintain consciousness, and the nausea in his stomach settles there like a brick. He feels like he needs to vomit, but he can’t. It’s almost as if the part of his nervous system that controls vomiting isn’t functioning, like it’s bogged down or lagging. He wonders if he would die if he just gave in and lost consciousness.

Thankfully, he doesn’t find out. He finally forces his body to expel the copious amounts of alcohol from his system. The substance comes out of his throat slowly, rather than forcefully as it typically is when one vomits. His vision is still tunneling and he still feels so dizzy he might fall over if he stands, and so once he’s done he lets unconsciousness claim him. If he dies before he wakes, would it really even be a loss to anyone?

Chapter End Notes

I love some good angst.

Also fun fact - the last part of this chapter was written from my own personal experience and I think it would be something Will might do if he were deeply traumatized and feeling rejected.

Chapter 12

Hannibal left Will, but there was a nagging feeling in his gut that wouldn't cease even as he made it to Baltimore. He wants to give Will space–thinks he *needs* it after his ordeal, but what if he's wrong? It wouldn't be the first time he'd misread a situation pertaining to Will. The man never fails to surprise him.

He gets home, goes inside and immediately pulls out his phone to call Will. The line rings then goes to voicemail. He tries it again, then a third time. All with the same result. Decision made, he gets back in his car and begins the drive to Wolf Trap.

He makes far better time than he usually does. He speeds, rolling through stop signs and even runs a red light. The nagging feeling isn't going away and he thinks Will might be in danger. He doesn't know what the danger is, but he knows he needs to be there with him.

Arriving at the small farmhouse, he gets out of his car and strides to the door. He doesn't run. But he wants to. Instead, he reaches the door and knocks. There are no dogs there to bark at the noise since they're still with Alana, and there's no other activity from within the house. But Will has to be inside. Right?

After several minutes that feel like an eternity, Hannibal makes the decision to force his way in. He tries the doorknob first, and surprisingly, it works. The door wasn't locked. As soon as the door opens, his senses are assaulted by the acrid scent of vomit and alcohol. Looking around, he sees Will. Unconscious on the floor, a trashcan full of vomit next to him.

"Will?" He calls out, but the man is out cold.

He's pale and looks so small like this. Hannibal beats himself up for not seeing that he was hurting. It's pretty clear now that Will didn't need *space* , he needed *support* .

Deciding that there will be plenty of time to beat himself up later, he instead opts to pick Will up and carry him to the bathroom. On his way, he makes note that Will is too thin. Feeling the way his hips jut out makes Hannibal uneasy. Though his boy is still beautiful, even in this state.

He places Will into the bathtub and turns the shower on, allowing the cold water to pelt his face. It's all it takes for Will to regain consciousness with a pained gasp. He looks up frantically through the spray and calms minutely when his eyes meet Hannibal's.

Confident that Will isn't going to pass out again, he turns the water off, leaving the chattering of Will's teeth to be the only sound in the bathroom. Will wraps his arms around himself and shivers, his entire body quaking. Hannibal turns and grabs a towel from the rack and goes to help Will stand. He ends up picking him up again because Will seems to have the dexterity of a newborn foal.

Wet and shivering, Will is seated on the closed toilet lid with a towel wrapped around his frame. He watches Hannibal *fuss* over him, like a worried mother. There's another towel in

Hannibal's hands and he's wiping away the water on Will's face, and then drying his hair.

"Let's get you out of these wet clothes, hm?" Hannibal muses, more to himself than Will but he nods in response regardless.

Will allows the towel to fall from his shoulders and he lifts his arms, doing what he can to assist in the removal of his shirt. The clothing was drenched, but he feels suddenly colder without the fabric covering him. He isn't ashamed of nakedness, not with Hannibal. Though perhaps he should be, he thinks. There's no way Hannibal wants to be taking care of him like he's a child.

His soaked shirt falls to the floor with a wet plop, and next, they get to work on his pants. Thankfully he's wearing sweatpants, so it's not difficult to stand him up and pull them down his legs. Left clad in only his boxers, Hannibal leaves him in the bathroom to find a change of clothes.

Surprisingly, Will's dresser is extremely organized. He has his white undershirts folded neatly, along with his underwear and socks. His closet is organized too–by color, no less. Hannibal hums appreciatively looking through his clothing, but settles on a clean pair of boxers, an undershirt, and some sleep pants.

Will's home has the immediate appearance of someone entirely disorganized, but when you look upon it for a moment there is obvious order in the chaos. It seems like an apt description of Will himself. Except not right now. Now, it seems his mind is just as disorganized as everything else. Hannibal hopes he can get Will back on his feet-–both literally and metaphorically.

When he returns, Will hasn't moved from his position on the toilet lid. He's still unclothed down to his boxers and he shivers minutely. Hannibal looks at the man for a moment, not caring about how it seems because Will's eyes are glassy. He's awake, but it doesn't seem like he's entirely aware of what's going on. Even with his limited faculties, Hannibal narrates all that he does.

"I'm going to help you out of your underwear now, alright?" He says gently, like he's attempting to calm a spooked animal.

A jerky nod of Will's head is all that he gets as consent, so he proceeds. His thumbs hook into the waistband of the garment and begin to pull them down. He's stopped suddenly when a pale arm reaches out and grips at his wrist. Will looks down at him, eyes clearer than they were a moment ago.

"Don't," He breathes.

It's not because he thinks Hannibal intends to harm him, rather it's because he knows what he looks like beneath the soaked cotton. His scars are still there, though they are overshadowed by the bruising scattered along his torso, down to his hips, and around his genitals. If he's being entirely honest, he's not sure when he got bruised *there* . He hadn't even considered that a possibility. But he feels like a walking bruise, inside and out now.

While he was unconscious in the hospital they did a rape kit, or a SAFE exam, as they say now. Either way, it's invasive and still just as terrible. Even if they give it a new name. He almost feels grateful that he was unconscious, but at the same time it feels like it was a greater violation. Like they even needed to do it, as if it wasn't obvious he'd been assaulted again and again.

"You can't stay in these wet clothes, you'll chafe." Hannibal reminds him.

Will frowns. He knows Hannibal is right, but out of all the injuries he currently has, chafing doesn't seem that bad.

"I'll do it myself." Will says.

Hannibal looks at him for a moment, and sighs. He sets the clean clothes on the counter and turns. He's not sure why Will is suddenly concerned with his modesty, but there will be time for questions later he tells himself.

"I'll be right out here if you need me."

Will struggles, pulling the wet clothing from his skin. The fabric sticks to him like glue and it takes him a long time to actually get it off. But he does, and the underwear gets added to the pile of his other wet clothes. He gets the dry shirt on without issue, but when he tries to slide the clean boxers on, he struggles.

Deciding he needs to stand to put them on, he gets to his feet shakily. He bends down to pull them up his legs, but the sudden shift in his center of gravity makes him stumble. He falls and hits his side on the counter painfully. He hisses and feels a sob perched under his chin. He feels like an invalid and it's all his own doing.

Hannibal hears the crash and comes inside. He sees the scene in front of him and knows he shouldn't have left. He knew Will wasn't steady on his feet.

Will's modesty forgotten, he rushes forward, kneeling where Will now sits on the floor. The man's nakedness doesn't bother him. He's entirely clinical in his care of the man right now. It's nothing he hasn't seen before.

Eventually, Will is dressed and Hannibal helps him back into the living room. He helps him into bed and sits in the chair nearest to him. Will struggles to sit up, looking at Hannibal through his lashes. He's ashamed. He feels guilty for subjecting Hannibal to all of this.

"Are you suicidal, Will?" Hannibal asks.

It's the question that's been on his mind since Will agreed to return to the compound. It seems even more pertinent given their current predicament. Hannibal naively believed most of Will's problems would be solved once he was no longer in captivity, but he sees now that it has only made room for another set of problems entirely.

Will sighs, "No."

"Then what's going on? You could have killed yourself today."

“I don’t want to bother you with this. You don’t have to keep taking care of me.”

“Do you think that’s what this is? I’m here because *I love you* , Will.”

The tears in Will’s eyes finally overflow and he begins to cry. Sobs rack his body as he tries to speak, so he clamps his mouth shut and tries to calm himself.

“Why did you let me come home alone then?” Will asks, voice raw.

“I thought you needed space. It seems I’ve misread the situation.”

“And I thought you were tired of me. That you were rejecting me. I couldn’t handle it.”

Hannibal takes the opportunity to move from his seat on the chair to the bed. He looks at Will, waiting for the man to tell him to stop, but he doesn’t. Instead, he inches closer, seeking out Hannibal’s touch. Finally, he gets Will in his arms. He strokes at the man’s hair and rubs soothing circles on his back.

“I don’t think either of us could survive separation.” Hannibal says quietly into Will’s damp curls.

“I don’t want to find out. Please don’t leave me.” Will pleads.

“Never.” Hannibal promises.

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

Writing soft Hannibal makes me ache, but like, in a good way

He pulls back and looks into Will's eyes, "I'm here to help you heal. You don't need to go through this alone."

Will whines at the words, pressing himself impossibly closer to Hannibal's chest. He aches, inside and out. He isn't sure if regret is the right word, but he wishes he'd never agreed to go undercover. He should have known he couldn't handle it. He hadn't even gotten over being inside the compound the first time.

He's broken in ways he isn't sure can ever be repaired.

"Please, come stay with me. You shouldn't be alone right now." Hannibal implores.

Will nods, feeling a warmth spread through him at Hannibal's words. He allows himself to take solace in the fact that he isn't alone. He knows Hannibal is there with him and that he's not going anywhere. He takes a deep breath and leans further into the embrace.

It's a start, he thinks. A shaky start, but one he can build on.

"The dogs?" Will asks, looking up with bloodshot eyes.

"They can come, too." Hannibal confirms.

He hates the idea of the canines galloping through his house, getting on his furniture, and leaving fur everywhere they go, but it's a small price to pay to take Will home. His house has been empty without the other man, and often, he lies awake and misses him. It's a bone deep ache, like a part of his heart is missing. After releasing Will, he'd begun to think the man had moved on from him, and it had hurt. But what he wanted, first and foremost, was for Will to find peace, and if that meant the other man moving on without him, then so be it.

Hannibal packs Will's things for him, though he doesn't have much he wants to bring, aside from the supplies for the dogs. He has clothing at Hannibal's house. Hannibal lays a sheet down on the leather seat of the Bentley, internally cringing at the multitude of dog paws about to be inside his car. Miraculously, they get them all inside and won't have to make a separate trip.

The drive home is quiet. Will stares out of the window, watching the passing scenery. It's comforting, familiar. He takes a deep breath and looks to Hannibal at his side. He is still in shock from the events, but he's alive and that's what matters.

They make it to Hannibal's house and the dogs bound out of the car, excited to be in a new place. Will follows more slowly, leaning heavily on Hannibal's arm. He takes a deep breath and looks up at Hannibal's house. It looks daunting, the home having been his prison at one point. But now, he’s going inside of his own volition.

Hannibal takes the bags from the car and leads the way inside. He takes Will to the guest room and lays out the supplies they brought. Will lays down on the bed, feeling the mattress sink under his weight. He takes off his shoes and lies there, exhausted.

Hannibal wants to tell Will he can sleep in his bedroom with him, but instead, he turns and leaves the man to rest.

As Will lay in the darkness, sleep still seems so far away. He tries to quiet the thoughts racing through his head, but the memories keep coming back to haunt him. He yearns to be near Hannibal, but despite the doctor's words of comfort, he still feels like a burden on him. His mind and heart are torn in two directions – to keep his distance or seek out solace.

The decision is taken out of his hands eventually, as Hannibal comes back into the room. He climbs in bed behind Will, his arms wrapping around the smaller figure in an embrace. Will relaxes into the touch, sighing as the fear and anxiety slowly recede.

"I'd feared I'd misread the situation again, and thought it would be best to be in here with you. I've missed you, Will." Hannibal murmurs.

He feels safe here, in Hannibal’s arms. He knows he will heal, in time. He has a friend, an ally, and someone who loves him. That’s all he needs right now. He falls asleep with his face pressed against Hannibal's chest, the man's scent the last thing he registers before he goes to sleep.

He opens his eyes, and he isn't in bed with Hannibal, he's strung up on the X-cross. His heart is beating so hard and fast, it's all he can hear. Mason is in front of him, smiling widely, his lips stretched unnaturally up his cheeks. His tongue is long, snake-like as it darts from his mouth and licks his lips. He eyes Will like he's a predator about to sink his teeth into his prey.

Will struggles against his binds, fear coursing through his veins. He looks around frantically for a way out, but he knows there's no escape. He is completely at Mason's mercy. His breathing comes in ragged gasps as he tries to make sense of the situation. He can't bring himself to look back up at Mason, not wanting to see what will happen next. All he can do is keep trying to break free from the binds and get him away from this *nightmare* .

Realization hits him just as Mason's hand caresses his face, and he wakes with a scream. He's awake now, and he knows it, but there are arms wrapped around him and he's *trapped* . He whines, long and low, and struggles against the hold, his nails making contact with his captor's face. His panic blinds him to where he is and who is holding him.

The room is dark, so when he finally frees himself from the arms caging him in, he falls out of bed and stumbles for the door. He frantically searches for the light switch as he hears a voice, close but distorted. It sounds like he's under water. When he finally flips the light on,

he's both ashamed and relieved to see Hannibal sitting up in bed, a newly bleeding wound on his cheek.

Will's eyes well up with tears as he sinks to the floor, curling into himself. He can't even bring himself to look at Hannibal. He feels guilty for attacking him and scared that Hannibal will be angry with him.

Hannibal moves across the room and kneels down in front of Will, compassion evident in his eyes. "It's alright," he says softly, running a hand through Will's hair. "What happened?"

Will takes a deep breath before explaining the dream to Hannibal. As he finishes speaking, Hannibal pulled him into a hug and holds him firmly against his body until Will goes slack. When they finally pull apart, Will gets a better look at Hannibal's wound.

"Can I clean you up?" Will asks softly.

He feels guilty for causing the injury, and thinks perhaps he will feel better if he can play a role in healing the wound. Thankfully, Hannibal seems to understand without his say-so, nodding with a warm smile.

"Let's go to the bathroom," Hannibal says.

Will realizes there's whining outside the bedroom door, and he moves to open it, smiling as he watches Winston bound inside and inspect both him and Hannibal before sitting at his feet. He pets the dog between his ears and wonders what he'd do without him. Winston is surely a once in a lifetime dog. He's intuitive almost like a person is, and he'd been invaluable while Will was living alone in Wolf Trap after his release from captivity.

"He stays in here with us," Will says, looking from Winston to Hannibal.

"Very well." Hannibal concedes.

Studies show that pets are positive influences on people suffering from PTSD, and despite the idea of dog hair on his bed, he knows the pros outweigh the cons. Winston's bond with Will is clearly strong, and he shouldn't have separated them. He *knows* Will isn't going to ask for things he needs, *especially* if he feels they'll inconvenience Hannibal.

Hannibal feels his chest constrict with a pain he can't define, like a dormant muscle suddenly being called into use. He remembers Mischa and the intensity of his love for her, and he had believed that his capacity for love was exhausted. But then Will comes along and Hannibal finds himself unable to articulate the depths of emotion that fill him up. Will challenges every notion Hannibal has of himself and what he is capable of feeling, stirring a kind of chaos in his heart that threatens to consume him.

The two finally move to the bathroom, Hannibal guiding Will with a gentle hand on his back. He starts to run the warm water in the sink and gets out a bowl, some medical supplies, and a washcloth. Will takes the supplies from him, their hands brushing ever so slightly as he does.

Will is careful as he cleanses Hannibal’s wound, gently wiping away any dried blood that may be present. He dabs on some antiseptic cream and covers it with a bandage before stepping away and leaning against the bathroom wall.

Hannibal looks at Will from across the room in awe of him, of how gentle he’d been despite how scared he must have been earlier. He crosses to where Will stands and wraps his arms around him slowly, letting Will choose if he wants to accept the embrace or not. To his surprise, Will relaxes into his arms and leans up and plants a tender kiss on the older man's lips.

Chapter 14

Will knows he's fucked up. He knows the damage is irreparable. But, he also knows he can mold himself into something new entirely, with Hannibal's help. Even with that knowledge, he can't banish the nightmares, panic attacks, or flashbacks from his time at the compound. The only part of his captivity that brings him any satisfaction is the knowledge he'd killed his tormentors. They died by his own hand–by his *teeth*.

Sometimes, he thinks he can still taste their blood on his tongue–even now, weeks after the incident.

He's been living with Hannibal permanently, he and his pack. He doesn't often long for the seclusion his little house in Wolf Trap promises, instead he finds himself seeking out other people. He's often more sociable than he's ever been. Of course, the majority of his time is spent with Hannibal, with Beverly and Alana making occasional appearances.

Will finds he prefers Beverly's company to Alana's. Alana treats him more like an abused dog than the grown man he is. He's tired of feeling infantilized, and spending time with Beverly is a breath of fresh air. She doesn't tiptoe around him, and she doesn't ask him about his experiences. Instead, she talks about cases with him. Jack had told him he wouldn't be needed for a while, so all Will's done is stay at Hannibal's and rest. There's only so much rest one can do before they start to go crazy with boredom.

One afternoon while Hannibal is at work, Beverly suggests she and Will go out, do something simple like have drinks at a bar. Will initially resists, he's not sure if he's ready to face people outside of his usual (very small) circle. But Beverly is relentless, she tells him stories of all the fun they'll have, the amazing new drink concoctions they can sample and all the interesting conversations they can have with strangers. She paints a picture so convincing that despite his misgivings, Will can't help but agree.

Hannibal returns from work to find Will and Beverly deciding what to do on their evening out. He smiles when Will tells him about their plans for the evening and offers them both a ride rather than having them pay for an Uber. Will spends most of the ride worrying about how he'll be received at the bar, but Beverly reminds him that no one there is going to know who he is. He doesn't need to be afraid of their reactions.

"You're Will Graham. Not an FBI profiler, not a victim, not weak. You're just you, and that's fine." She tells him, sensing his anxiety.

He pretends that works to quell his anxiety, purely for her benefit. He's worried this is going to be too far outside of his comfort zone. He'd never frequented bars before he was taken, why would he start now? His discomfort is palatable in the air, but neither Beverly or Hannibal mention it.

"If at any point, you wish to leave. Call me and I'll come right away. I'm only five minutes away." Hannibal tells him as he pulls up to the curb.

The bar Beverly has chosen is a newer one, and the music coming from inside is clearly from the current pop hits. The patrons appear younger than he and Beverly, but that actually seems to work to calm some anxiety. Younger people aren't as scary, he thinks. But he knows that's a stupid idea. Anyone can be dangerous. Regardless, Will isn't going to be drugged and kidnapped a second time, he'll *die* before he lets that happen.

As they enter the bar, Will instantly notices a few of the patrons looking his way. He tenses up and then looks away, doing his best to ignore them. Beverly orders their first round of drinks, and as he takes his first sip, he finally relaxes. That is until he catches sight of Freddie Lounds talking to a group of people across the bar.

Freddie Lounds had been writing about him during and after his abduction by the Mason Verger's organization. She was relentless in her pursuit of the truth, never letting up. Though her brand of 'truth' really can't be called truth at all. She'd written a detailed piece about Will's time in captivity, spinning it into a web of *consensual* sex slavery from the bits and pieces of information she'd gathered about it. Nothing about what he'd gone through was consensual, and for that, he despises her. Her only concern is how many clicks her stories on Will get.

Will swallows nervously before nudging Beverly in Freddie's direction with his elbow.

"We should go," he tells her.

"Why?" she asks, confused.

Will nods in Freddie's direction and she follows his gaze before understanding finally dawns on her.

"Come on," She says, pulling on Will's arm and guiding him towards the exit, drinks forgotten on the table. "You don't have to deal with her. We'll go somewhere else."

But as they step out of the bar, Will hears Freddie's voice calling out to them. He turns to see her walking towards them, a smile on her face.

"Will Graham," she says, her smile widening, "What a pleasant surprise."

Will's hands ball into fists. He's not going to hit a woman, but he *wants* to. Whatever Freddie is, woman isn't the first word he'd use to describe her. He knows what she must think of him, given the things she writes about him.

"Leave him alone," Beverly demands, stepping between them. It isn't in an attempt to protect Will more than it is to protect Freddie from how he might react.

"Oh come on, let the *pet* fight his own battles." Freddie replies, pulling out a discreet camera to snap some photos of the pair.

"You've been quite reclusive since your reentry into society, Will. Why is that? Too afraid to show your face after what you've allowed yourself to become?"

"I didn't *allow* anything," He growls, resisting the urge to shove Beverly aside to get at Freddie.

"I find it hard to believe a man as unstable and angry as yourself would have let yourself be kidnapped as you claim. Not to mention, you're *old*. You're not like the people sex traffickers would target. Lying because you're ashamed of what you've done is unbecoming of you, Will."

Anger bubbles up inside Will like a pot boiling over. He sees red as he approaches Freddie enraged, ready to unleash his repressed rage on her. But before he can take a step, Beverly grabs onto Will's arms, holding him back with all her strength.

"Will, no! Don't do this. You don't want to be the person she's been implying you are," She says desperately.

Will glances back into Beverly's eyes and sees his own sadness and anger reflected there. He *knows* what Freddie has said isn't true and that he has nothing to be ashamed of. But more than anything he wants revenge for everything Mason Verger put him through and Freddie is the closest thing he has to justice right now, since Mason is already dead. With a heavy sigh, Will finally yields and steps back from Freddie with one last glare at her before turning away.

The anger inside him due to his past trauma is immense, even though the instigator of it had been obliterated. By his own doing, the cause of his pain was wiped away. He had thought that once Mason and Cordell had been killed, it would make dealing with his pain more bearable. However, the anguish still stays with him, infecting every aspect of his being. It's an obvious truth that the deaths of those two can't provide any relief from the hurt he faced, but he foolishly believed it would be a solution. Now he has redirected his rage onto Freddie.

It's useless, she's just a tabloid reporter. She writes whatever she wants to, in hopes it'll drive traffic to her site. He doesn't even know if she believes what she writes. He hopes she isn't *that* naive.

He turns, to see Freddie still standing there, several feet back from where she was a moment ago. Her face is an impasse and he can't tell what she's thinking. She doesn't look particularly angry, or afraid.

"Do you really believe those things?" Will asks, voice lacking the cadency he'd intended it to have.

Freddie's eyes soften almost imperceptibly before she says, "No."

Will clenches his jaw. He doesn't have to ask why she writes it, then. He already knows. Freddie is unethical, but maybe she isn't entirely devoid of empathy. He waves her off and he and Beverly walk down the street. Instead of calling Hannibal, they opt to walk back to his home, given that neither of them had the opportunity to get drunk.

"That was disappointing," Will laments.

"It'll be better next time." Beverly replies, a half smile gracing her features.

Chapter 15

Beverly drops Will off and heads on her way. It isn't late, but it was clear Will wasn't up for talking anymore, so she decides to give him the space he needs. Walking into the foyer, Will sheds his coat and toes off his shoes before looking for Hannibal. With socked feet on hardwood, Hannibal doesn't immediately notice Will's presence as he cuts vegetables for dinner.

"Hi," Will says, approaching the counter.

"Will?" Hannibal asks, looking up at the man, surprised.

"We ran into Freddie." Will says, knowing that will explain why he's home early.

"Ah."

Will feels small, as if he's done something worthy of punishment. He knows he hasn't, knows he's a grown man who doesn't need to be *punished* , but the nagging feeling won't seem to subside. He wishes he'd gotten the chance to actually get drunk, even if it isn't the best idea for him, given the way he'd indulged several weeks ago. But alcohol is great for numbing him, making him feel fuzzy around the edges. It replaces the anxiety always twisting in his stomach with pleasant warmth. He wants that now.

"Did Beverly leave?"

"Yeah, said she wanted to get home." Will says, unsure of why he's lying. She hadn't said that.

Hannibal stops what he's doing and rounds the counter, getting into Will's space in a quick, fluid motion. It makes Will flinch, the ball of anxiety in his stomach curling impossibly tighter. He isn't afraid of Hannibal, but his body is afraid of *everything* sometimes. He hears Hannibal's sharp intake of breath, and wonders what he smells on Will.

"You're not intoxicated." Hannibal observes.

"Didn't get the chance to be," Will mumbles.

Hannibal's hand is reaching for Will's face, and when the pad of his thumb touches Will's jaw he flinches backwards forcefully, almost causing himself to fall.

"I didn't mean to startle you," Hannibal says quietly, understanding.

Will swallows and takes a step back, "I just- I feel like I should have said something to Freddie. Something that would make up for the way I acted towards her at the bar. But I didn't know what to say. And now it feels like maybe I deserve to be punished for the way I behaved."

Hannibal looks at Will with a gentle sort of sadness and he shakes his head softly, “you don’t deserve punishment any more than anyone else does. We all make mistakes and we must learn to forgive ourselves before we can move on." He pulls Will in closer and wraps his arms around him, letting out a deeply exhaled breath as if allowing himself this much closeness is a rarity.

Will finds himself sinking into Hannibal's embrace with a shudder.

"You're too gentle with me," Will says, face pressed into Hannibal's chest. It's so muffled, Hannibal almost misses it.

"You deserve gentleness." Hannibal tells him.

"I don't think I do."

Will knows there's darkness within himself. He's killed people, and he's wanted to kill more. When Freddie had approached him at the bar, he'd considered, albeit briefly, killing her. Someone with so much darkness inside them can't deserve gentleness. They should only be given what they give back to the world.

Will extricates himself from Hannibal's hold, his eyes shining with unshed tears. He needs to be punished. That's the only thing that'll make him feel right again.

"I *need* to be punished for how I behaved." Will implores, even as his voice shakes.

He doesn't want to be punished. He's terrified of it, actually. But he thinks it's the right thing to do. Maybe if Hannibal would beat him bloody he wouldn't feel so terrible all the time. The idea threatens to send him hurdling into a flashback.

He's strapped down and gagged, shouting through it angrily. His trainers call him difficult, and punish him often, but this is the first time they've procured a whip for his punishments. Will struggles uselessly against his binds, anger turning into rage, but it still isn't enough to free himself. The blows begin to rain down on him, the hits feeling like fire licking at his skin. He cries out as much as he can through his gag. They keep hitting him, hard enough to leave red, angry welts, but not hard enough to break skin, but it doesn't matter. It goes on for so long it threatens to make him forget his own name.

"Please, stop. Please," Will cries out through the gag, his entire body shaking violently.

In response, there's laughter. People enjoy seeing him suffer. He begs anyway, pleads with them to stop.

"Will, you're having a flashback. Whatever you're seeing is not real." Hannibal says, placing his hands on Will's shoulders where he's backed himself up against a wall.

The sight of Will's panic tugs at Hannibal's heart, reminding him once again that he does indeed have one. Will slides down the wall, his eyes losing their glassy appearance. He looks up at Hannibal, chest heaving and tears tracking down his face. His hands shake as he wipes them away.

Hannibal lowers himself to Will's level, but does not touch him, even as his hands ache to do so. Seeing Will like this makes Hannibal recall the desire to put an end to the man's misery. If he'd killed him instead of releasing him, Will would no longer be suffering. Perhaps it's Hannibal's own selfishness that keeps him from doing it. He loves Will, and doesn't want to exist in a world without him in it.

Pulling him away from his macabre thoughts is Will, closing the distance between them. He kisses Hannibal tentatively, and all he can do is return the kiss, as confused as he is. Will's hands are encircling the back of his neck and pressing Hannibal's face even closer to his own, deepening the kiss. Will moans softly into Hannibal's mouth, and the sound goes right to his cock.

Will doesn't know why he's pressing himself into Hannibal and kissing him like his life depends on it, but he does know it feels *good* . If he can't numb his emotions with alcohol, perhaps sex is the next best thing. He snakes his hand between them rubs Hannibal's erection through his slacks. He's hard, and Will moans at the feeling of arousal between Hannibal's legs. Will's own cock is still soft in his jeans, likely still reeling because of his flashback. But he doesn't care. He wants to touch Hannibal, not be touched by him.

"Let's go to bed," Will says, breaking the kiss.

Hannibal's mind is foggy with desire, and he nods in agreement. He hasn't had Will in this way since he'd gone back to the compound. He'd be lying if he said he hadn't thought about it, jerked off to it, even. Will is the embodiment of perfection: the lithe body Hannibal knows is hidden beneath his clothes and his hardening cock of average size, looks perfect curving up as his cheeks flush red with arousal. The dark curls that frame his forehead and his light blue eyes that penetrate Hannibal's soul, leaving him speechless.

When they make it to the bedroom, Hannibal lays Will down on the bed. He wants to ravish the younger man, the thought making his mouth dry, the heat of his arousal coursing through him like lava.

"Come here," Will demands, though his voice is soft.

Hannibal can do nothing but obey. He crawls onto the bed, his body fitting between Will's open legs. He pushes Will's shirt up to reveal his chest, leaning down to take a nipple in his mouth. Will writhes beneath him, moaning. His cock is finally beginning to harden in his jeans, and he cants his hips upward searching for friction. Hannibal's mouth trails downwards, licking and kissing his way over Will's body until he reaches his jeans. He pulls the zipper down before reaching his hand in, curling his fingers around Will's cock.

The sensation causes Will to gasp and his hips to jerk upwards, his cock quickly reaching full hardness.

"That feels good," he moans, words sounding like a prayer on his lips.

Hannibal smiles against him, bringing his lips back up to Will's, kissing him with a newfound urgency. He works Will's jeans off as his hand pumps up and down on his shaft. Will's hips are bucking and grinding against Hannibal's palm, reveling in the sensations.

"Stop," Will gasps, and Hannibal immediately stills his movements.

He'd felt his orgasm rapidly approaching, and he doesn't want to come like this. Isn't even sure he wants to come *at all* . He knows he doesn't deserve to be punished for his actions towards Freddie, but maybe this would be enough; denying himself release. Logically, he knows he shouldn't be using sex to punish himself, but it seems like the best way, at least, in his mind that's currently fuzzy with arousal.

"Are you alright?" Hannibal asks, concerned.

"I'm alright, I was just going to... come, and I don't want to like that." Will explains. "Fuck me."

"Are you sure?" Hannibal asks.

He isn't sure, but he knows he's healed from his time at the compound. Hannibal is gentle with him, and won't hurt him. He likes sex with Hannibal, though they haven't done much of it together. It surprised Will to find out how attentive Hannibal is in bed. It's something he isn't used to. Of course, most of his past partners had been women, and it seems the responsibility of attentiveness had fallen on him by default with them. It's nice to be cared for, to have someone worship him the way Hannibal does.

"Please," He replies, breathless.

Hannibal's usually impeccable self control crumbles at Will's plea, so he does. Hannibal undresses himself, leaving his clothing in a pile on the floor, something he usually wouldn't do. He'll worry about his suit later. Then, he's helping Will out of his clothing, leaving the pair naked, bared to one another.

Grabbing a tube of lubricant, he lubes up his fingers before slipping them inside Will's tight hole, prepping him. Will gasps at the sensation, gripping the sheets beneath him as Hannibal slides in a second finger. He moves them in and out, curling his fingers to massage Will's prostate. Will's breath is hitching and he's panting, getting closer to coming.

Hannibal pulls his fingers out, coating them in the slick wetness before reaching for his cock. He works it inside Will, pushing deep until he's fully seated. Will's body relaxes, and his head tilts back as he basks in the sensation. Hannibal begins to thrust in and out of Will, slowly at first, then faster, panting as he moves. Will wraps his legs around Hannibal's waist, pushing against him, encouraging him to go faster. Hannibal's thrusts become harder, deeper, and Will cries out in pleasure.

He feels himself getting closer to the edge, and resolved that he's not going to come, he grits out, "slow down,"

Hannibal obeys, slowing his hips immediately, thrusting languidly deep into Will, then back out. His cock still brushes Will's prostate every time he moves, and he doesn't know if he can *not* come from this.

"Are you alright?" Hannibal asks, wiping away the sweat dampened curls from Will's forehead.

"Yeah, just want this to last longer," Will replies, forcing a smile.

Will *whines,* low and needy *,* when Hannibal's large hand wraps around his cock, stroking gently as he thrusts into Will slowly. Will writhes beneath him, his head warring against his body. It feels so, so good. And he doesn't deserve to feel good. Will blindly grabs for Hannibal's wrist, stopping his ministrations.

"Want to come from your cock." Will says, before releasing Hannibal's wrist.

The idea of Will coming untouched is almost enough to send Hannibal over the edge, but he reins himself in, his desire to see Will come aching within him.

Will bites his lip to hold back his moans, but he can't help but gasp as he comes, spilling himself all over Hannibal's chest and stomach. The pleasure washes over him in waves, but the pleasure fizzles out almost immediately, shame filling him up because he couldn't hold his orgasm back. He'd come untouched, from slow thrusts brushing against his prostate. Hannibal, completely unaware of Will's internal struggle, thrusts erratically as he spills inside him.

Content to lie sleepily with Will as he wades in his post-orgasmic bliss, Hannibal reaches for Will, taking the man in his arms. Not caring that Will's come is still on Will's belly, and now on him as well. They can shower and change the sheets later, he muses to himself.

Will tenses in Hannibal's hold, but tries to relax. He *really* doesn't want to explain why he's upset. But of course, even through the haze of an orgasm, Hannibal is endlessly observant. He can tell something is off with Will.

"Is something wrong? Did I hurt you?" Hannibal asks.

Will shakes his head, "No, it's not that. I'll be alright in a few minutes. It's just... it feels too good, and I don't think I deserve it."

Hannibal frowns at Will's confession. He knows Will's self-punishment isn't the healthiest way of dealing with his trauma, but he also knows he can't force him to open up about it. He can only be there for Will in whatever way he needs.

Hannibal takes a few minutes to simply hold Will close, not speaking. He knows Will doesn't need him to fill the air with false platitudes, just a comforting presence. When Will finally speaks, he sounds more calm than he had before.

"I'm sorry," He says, voice barely above a whisper.

"Don't be," Hannibal replies, his voice gentle.

Will's time at the compound, when his days were filled with punishments for even his smallest infractions, leaves him feeling like he's missing part of himself now that he's free. He spends time waiting for the other shoe to drop, for him to do something worthy of a

punishment. Of course, he doesn't *want* to be punished, but he feels like he *needs* it. The need claws its way through him, making him feel torn open on the inside. He doesn't want to feel like this anymore.

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